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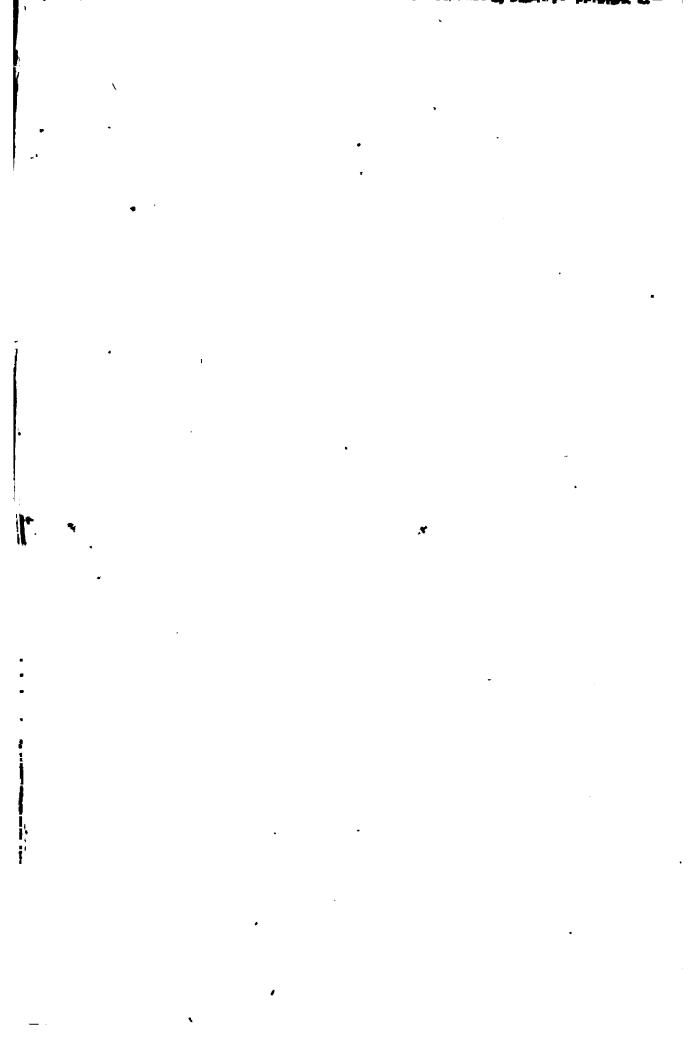
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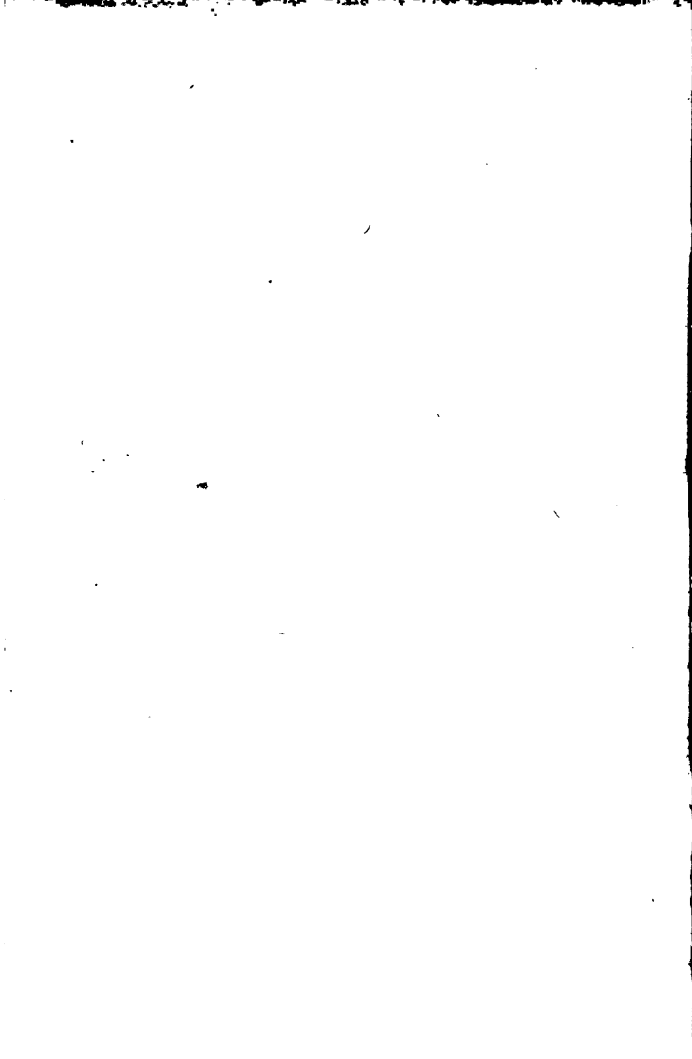
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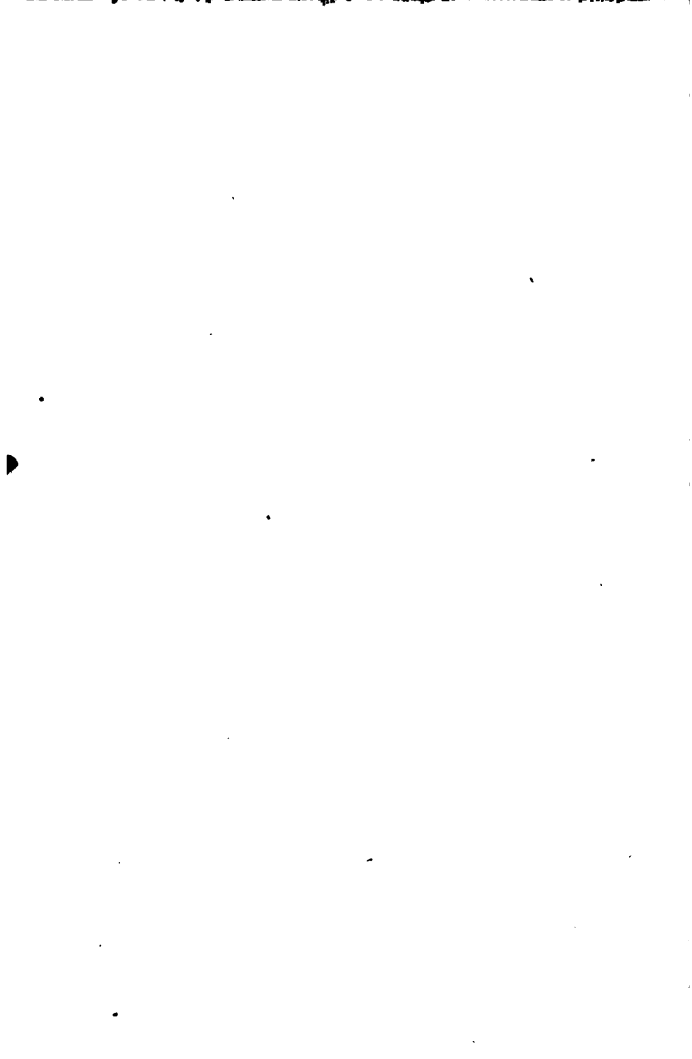


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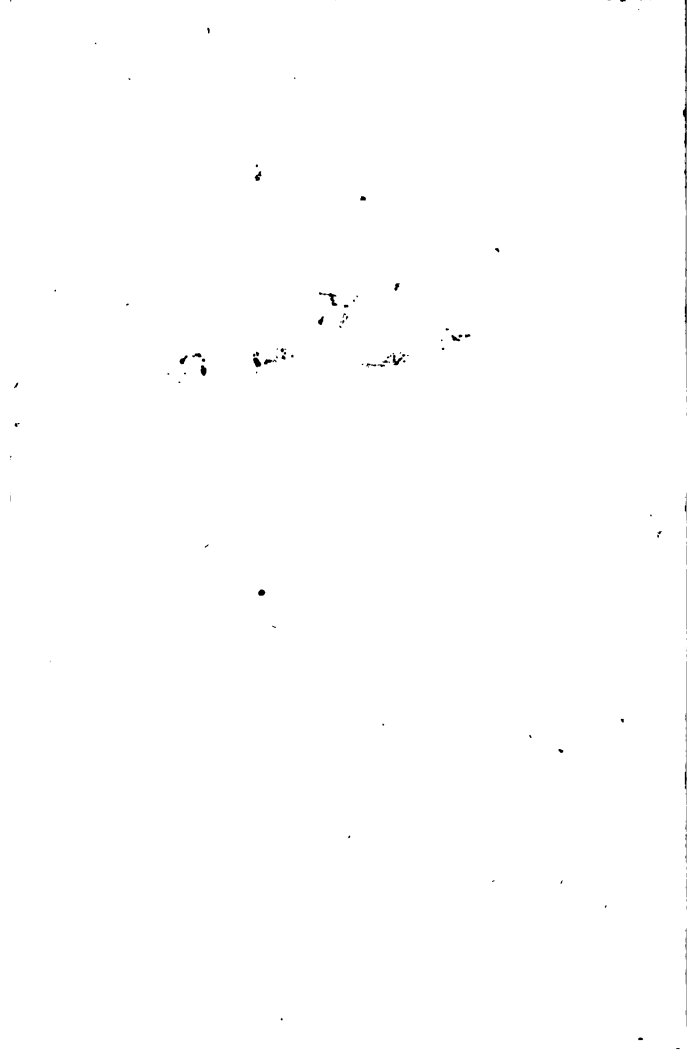












THE
MORAL INFLUENCE,
DANGERS AND DUTIES,
CONNECTED WITH
GREAT CITIES.

BY JOHN TODD.

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TO

THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, Esq.,

Chancellor of the University of New York.

SIR,

Few men, in the Providence of God, occupy a better position for doing good than yourself. Your past life is a warrant, not only that the remainder of your days will be filled up in usefulness, but also that you will rejoice in every attempt of your fellow-laborers in the common vineyard of Christ, to bless their species, however humble the attempt may be.

The little book which you now hold in your hand, is sent into the world with the warm wish that it may convey hints and make impressions which will be useful, upon three classes of the great community : viz.—*those who reside in great cities;—those who are about to come into the great city;—and those who have sent, or who are about to send, children and friends to reside in the great city.*

It requires very little humility in me to say, that I have not, in the following pages, done as well as the subject demands; probably not so well as the reader has a right to expect; certainly, not so well as to feel satisfied myself. The ground is new, and, so far as I am informed, unexplored by any Christian philanthropist. My hope is, that those who know nothing of the difficulties of such a work will find something that will repay them for reading; that those, who, like yourself, can appreciate the difficulties, will feel ready to excuse deficiencies; and that the Great Head of the Church who knows all the difficulties under which I have labored, will say,—he hath done what he could.

Be pleased to accept this as a slight token of the high respect and affection in which you are held by the Christian public, and especially by

Your friend and servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA,
Clinton Street, May 1, 1841.

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GREAT CITIES.

LECTURE I.

IMPORTANCE OF HAVING RELIGION IN GREAT CITIES.

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.” — **MATT. xi. 1.**

WHEN the Great Author of the Christian religion was about to establish his kingdom on earth, he showed divine wisdom in selecting instruments by which to do it. He commissioned illiterate men, incapable of forming plans and impositions, that the world might see that the spiritual temples which they reared, were the work of God; and, lest this ignorance should lead them into great and fatal mistakes, he took care to guard this point. This was done in two ways; first, by

the light of his own example; and, secondly, by sending the Spirit of God to guide them "into all truth." Here the two things met; ignorance, to show that they could not devise and execute the plan of themselves, and the superintending power of God, to keep them from making great mistakes. Hence, when we see the example of Christ, and also that of the Apostles, as they steadily pursued the object, pointing out a particular course of duty, we know that it must be a very important duty.

The ministry of Christ was very much spent upon large cities and towns. The whole book of John is taken up in describing what Christ did and taught at the great national feasts at Jerusalem. Chorazin, Capernaum, and the cities of Samaria and Judea, were the fields of his labors. When he sent out his disciples to announce his approach, he sent them into the cities whither he himself would come: and when warning the disciples that they would meet with persecutions, he tells them, when thus persecuted in one city,—instead of hiding in the country, to flee to another city. And when he gave that great commission,

“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” he tells them to *begin* at Jerusalem, the city in which the scattered were gathered from all parts of the earth.

In tracing the labors of the Apostles, you will notice that the great cities were the points of attack, and into these they hastened to carry the Gospel, even at the risk of life. The first onset, upon a world lying in wickedness, was at Jerusalem. The first church was gathered there; but there the Apostles did not stop. When persecuted and scattered, you do not see them creeping round in hiding-places, and in dens and caves of the earth, but going to Samaria, or some other great city, and there preaching Christ and him crucified; and there was great joy in every such city.

So important did God deem it that the Gospel should be preached at Rome, the mistress of the earth, that he suffered Paul to be chained there two full years, that he might preach the Gospel in Rome also; and to that church, the noblest letter ever penned, was addressed.

Ephesus contained the great temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the world; and there the apostle goes and preaches the Gospel from house to house, for three years; and there the converted magicians burned their books, to the value of nearly thirty thousand dollars; and to them also was an inspired letter sent. Corinth, polluted to a by-word even among the heathen, early received the Gospel from the mouths of the Apostles. And at Antioch, the third city of the world, ten miles in circumference, Paul and his companion labored a whole year, and gathered much people. So we might go to Philippi, to Iconium, to the seven cities in which were planted the seven churches of Asia, and to which the special care of Christ addressed as many distinct admonitions, and to many other great cities, and we shall find that it was usual for the Apostles, when they went out on a missionary excursion, to go directly to the great cities; and that in them were great and powerful revivals.

There must have been some universal, and strong reasons, why the Apostles did so; and whatever these reasons might have been, they

undoubtedly felt that it was of the first importance that the Gospel should be preached early, and planted deeply and firmly, in great cities.

The example of the prophets, indeed, is to the same point; for when you find them uttering their messages under the very shadow of the throne, it was not, as all will allow, because this was a safe, or a pleasant position; but for other, and very important reasons. And when we find that the Apostles likewise rushed into the great cities of the nations, it must have been because they felt it to be very important to seize these posts; and to the discussion of the question, WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE GOSPEL TAKE DEEP HOLD IN OUR GREAT CITIES, will the present Lecture be directed.

I. *The very constitution of a great city demands the influence of the Gospel.*

The elements which composed a great city in ancient, were very different from those in modern times. Suppose you visit one of the cities in the ancient world. You find it situated in the heart of some great and rich valley, which can afford food for a large popula-

tion. The city is the growth of necessity. War is the great business of nations and tribes, and so they find it necessary to collect together, and build a great wall around them, to protect them from the invasions of neighboring nations. If walls and garrisons could protect them, the city stood in some great plain, as did Babylon and Nineveh. If they stood in some great thoroughfare between nations, like the five great cities of the Philistines, they became large forts to protect from the incursions of foreign armies.

If this position was too insecure, they reared the city on some inaccessible pile of rocks, and sought safety in the strong-holds of nature. The tower stood frowning from the top of the precipice. Thus Jerusalem was reared by the Jebusites, on the "munitions of rocks." The food, and every other necessary, of course, had to be transported from some distance, at great expense. Hence, though these rock-based cities were only secondary in size, nature rendered them almost impregnable; and while such cities as Babylon and Nineveh shut themselves up behind their massy walls, and gigantic gates of brass, the

city on the hills lifted its head in sunshine, and seemed to look down upon her foes. The comparative advantages of the two positions, though curious in discussion, would be out of place here.

But in planning and rearing a modern city, the whole object and plan contemplated is widely different. Were a man now to plan a great city, he would not be a man who was looking out for a spot where he might make brick, and rear huge walls for a protection to a multitude who would call this fort after his name; it would not be a man who was climbing the mountains to find an inaccessible spot where men might be safe because their fellows could not get at them, — but it would be a man with a great capital, passing along the coast, peeping into every basin of the sea, to find the spot where commerce might bring her freights, land them easily and readily, and where her craft would be sheltered from the storm. Accordingly, you would see him looking out for some deep bay, where these advantages might be united. There must be, in addition, a rich back country, if he expects to have it a great city. The back country

must be well filled up with population, to afford food for the city, and to take and consume what commerce gathers in, and to fill her ships with something in exchange, to be consumed in other countries.

Now the process commences. There must be a gathering of men at once, to make the brick, and rear the store-houses. This brings the laborer and the mechanic on the ground. The goods which commerce gathers into these store-houses must now be distributed over the face of the land, and this brings the merchant to rear his shop, and to become the channel through which foreign goods are distributed. Then come other mechanics to rear dwellings, and to supply the wants of all these, and the laborers to do all kinds of work, and to receive prompt pay. This creates a market. Then comes professional talent and skill to cure the diseases of the body, — to aid in administering justice, and to detect the guilty, — to instruct the intellect, and to guide the mind there concentrated. Having ships which now visit all climes, and bring the good things which other lands yield, and an abundant market, luxury can now come in and feast her vota-

ries ; and fashion can follow hard after, and be sure to find eyes to gaze at her, and weak heads and hollow hearts to envy, and admire, and imitate her fickleness,—a great multitude, who will chase the wheels of her chariot, and feel honored if they can get near enough to be sprinkled with their dust.

The *country*, in distinction from the city, was created by God, and is the natural abode of man. The hills and valleys are there ; the mountains reposing in blue ; the laughing, leaping brooks ; the sweet dews of morning ; the swelling richness of spring ; the glories of summer ; the ripe fulness of autumn, and the bracing air of winter, are there. There, childhood loves to draw its free breath, and send out its merry shout, — the very echo of a heart full of joy, — to leave its foot-prints among the dew-fed flowers, and to have the strongest, deepest, tenderest associations formed there. There, the heart lives and communes with nature ; and the images impressed upon the soul in this home of nature, remain unefaced, amid all the cares and the corroding anxieties of artificial life. The heart will show its yearnings, when it feels the thrill of

real ecstasy, as the long-watched bud, in the city's pent-up walls, first opens; and every flower that stands in the parlor, and bends its gentle head towards the sun-lit window, as if imprisoned and longing to get out, is a silent but eloquent witness, that the home of the human heart and the home of the flower is one and the same — the country.

You would naturally expect that in the great city, the centre of the population, would be the centre of fashion, of wealth, and perhaps of the highest professional attainment; and that as you recede from the centre, you find fashion and wealth decrease, — though constantly pressing up towards the centre, — till you get to the outskirts, where you may expect to find poverty, ignorance, and great wretchedness. You will naturally expect, too, that Wealth and Fashion are the deities which preside over the great city; and as the former is invariably the parent of the latter, you must expect to find that on no spot, in the world, can wealth give such immediate power, and consequently on no spot is it so eagerly sought, as in the great city. The next and certain consequence of this is, that you see the

young, the ardent, the keen, and the gifted, rushing into these great marts of nations, to court the smiles of Mammon; — all hoping for his gifts. Those who can receive them by the most devoted worship, are willing to have them on these terms; and of those who can have them only by playing the sharper, too many are willing to accept them on these conditions. Hence the population of the great city consists, not of the aged, the grey-headed, and the infirm alone, but of youth, and strength, and eager manhood, — powerful reapers, rushing into the field, and all hoping to share in the rich harvest. The young man goes from the home of his widowed mother, to try his fortune in the great city. He is full of hope, and life, and rainbows dance in his pathway. But when he reaches the arena, he finds thousands equally eager, and equally strong, ready to contest the prize with him, — to push as hard; and to jostle with as little ceremony as himself. On all sides of him are the songs and the invitations of pleasure, the snares and the pit-falls covered with flowers, — temptations adapted to his passions, his ignorance, and his youth. To these very many yield;

and hence it is, that of the thousands who go into the great city, hoping and expecting in after life to return to their native village, and spend many years in elegant repose, probably not one in a hundred ever realizes his dreams. All hope by-and-by to be able to retire on a competency. A few can do it; but what an amazing proportion fall in the race! and the tide rolls on, and they and their hopes are forgotten!

If you look at the man of business in the great city, you see that he has no time to attend to the education of his children; can hardly step into the school to see how they are taught, and has no time to attend to the guardianship of his clerks or apprentices. You must expect to find all things artificial; for, in the great city, the problem is to accomplish the most possible, in the shortest space of time, and on the smallest space of territory. Hence, the elegant strait-jacket, made of the richest silks, and dyed in Tyrian-colors, is put upon the body and limbs of that imaginary being whom we denominate Society; and so closely and perpetually are the lacings drawn, that the heart of friendship beats with a pul-

sation so feeble, that it *seems* as if it were really dead. Perhaps I may endanger that delicate thing called popularity by plain speaking ; but I may surely ask in an under-tone, at the door of the heart, if it be not so that there is such a thing in the great city as having the heart-ache over its own void, and if there be not such a thing as having the soul long to be so enshrined in the heart of friendship, as it never can be there ? And the most distressing part of the experience is, that in proportion as you attempt to enlarge the circle, and come in contact with greater numbers, in the same proportion must the contact be slight, the civilities be formal, and the offerings of the heart insincere and cold. Home is not natural, friendships are not, time is not, society is not, in the great city. They cannot be. All are necessitated to fall in with the race, and perform most of their duties under great disadvantages.

Here, then, we say, from the very nature of the materials which compose the great city, we need the Gospel to come in with all its power. That youth, so eager, so full of hope, so full of impetuosity, and so full of ignorance

of the future, needs it to curb his eagerness, to shield him from temptations, to guard him if prospered, and to comfort and cheer him if disappointed.

That man, strong in manhood's prime, needs it to keep him from doing wrong while running the race, to hush and calm his strong, awakened, and stimulated ambition, — to keep him from being unbalanced, — to prevent his chasing bubbles, — to concentrate his affections on home, and to lead him to feel that he and his, have the high duties to perform connected with another and a better city.

That votary of fashion needs religion to soften and warm that heart which fashion freezes up, — to open those fountains of kindness and mercy which fashion closes, and to impress upon the fluttering, giddy one, that the fashion of this world passeth away.

Is it possible that the mighty mass gathered into the great city from all points of the compass — men of all characters and professions, and habits and feelings, can have much real sympathy and communion with each other? Yes, it is possible, — for there is one thing, and only one, that can create a common feel-

ing, and a common sympathy. There is one thing that can direct all eyes to one point, and draw the hearts of the high and the low, the rich and the poor to one point — and that is the religion of the Bible, pointing all to citizenship in the world of glory, and to the crown of life above. The heart smitten by this rod, will send out the waters of sympathy and of mercy. These many strong desires, these awakened hopes, these gilded anticipations, these strong determinations, this excited energy of character, and these agitated feelings of the ten thousand aching hearts in the great city, send forth their troubled, but stifled groanings, for something that can pour oil on the billows, that can heal the hearts that are breaking, and that can give the immortal creature a better portion than this.

II. The second reason why we need the Gospel in the great city is derived from *the multitudes of souls that compose its population*.

In the sight of God, one soul is as valuable as another. It will live as long; it cost as much to redeem it; it may rise as high in the society of heaven, and it may sink as deep in

the world of sorrow. To be sure, one soul may do more mischief, or more good than another ; but this is circumstantial, and neither can do any thing more than God permits.

The Gospel is designed for all classes of men. There are none so high that they do not need its aid and its promises, for they cannot long enjoy that elevation : there are none so low that it cannot reach and raise them : none so wise that they may not here see the perfection of all wisdom, and none so ignorant that they cannot be taught by the lowly Redeemer. The strong mind of such a man as Paul becomes stronger and nobler, by embracing the Gospel ; and the little child can aid in filling the temple with hosannas, and can die an hundred years old.

Where would you rear the hospital, unless where the sick abound ? Where should the rivers of life flow most abundantly, unless where the multitudes are perishing with thirst ? Where should the Gospel carry its joys of pardoned sin, unless where there are the most hearts to be broken and healed ?

The Angel of the covenant comes to the great city, and there are the multitude of

fashion's votaries feeding on wind, and he would lead them to the bread of heaven; — a multitude who hold the muck-rake, and spend life in scraping for the perishable riches of time, and he would point them to the riches of eternity: a multitude who live for pleasure, and who are becoming partly brutes and partly fiends in its pursuit, and they need to be washed, to be regenerated, and changed; and a multitude who feel that fortune treads them down with an iron shoe, and they need the Gospel, — which is always the poor man's friend.

These are all patients for the spiritual hospital; and the peculiar difference between the village and the great city is, that here the multitude is greater, — their diseases more varied and malignant, — their sorrows more unalleviated, — their woes more unseen, and their case, to human view, more hopeless.

It is in the great city that Satan comes with his most untiring and energetic efforts. Here he has most minds to operate upon, and better tools with which to accomplish his plans. Here, in the metaphor of the Bible, are the fish of a great sea, who need the Gospel of

Christ. They are immortal, and they are passing on to eternity in rapid succession. Here the net needs to be thrown constantly, and with a powerful hand, and with great perseverance and skill. The Gospel has hitherto been able to do little more than to hold its own, and stem the currents which set against it in the thronged city : but it is taking new means and new weapons by which to accomplish its certain results. Instead of fishing for the great mass, it is now going into that individuality of effort by which the child will be taught, one by one, and by which the tract will reach individuals, one by one.

It was the city where multitudes had lived, over whose desolations Jeremiah wept and mourned ; — it was the great city over which Christ wept, because there the multitude were to have their hopes for both worlds crushed ; — and Oh ! when the time shall come, when the Church of God shall call from the upper chamber till the day of Pentecost shall return, — and the Spirit of God come down to visit every great collection of sinners, — then, in the mighty mass of men, will the mighty power of God be seen and felt, and there will

the angels of light shout with loud voices over the multitude whose mouths God hath filled with songs of praise. And if a multitude on the deck of the ship laboring in the storm, — if a multitude where the plague is pouring out its vials of woe, — if a multitude is of great consequence and of great interest in any position in which they can be placed on earth, surely, in the light of that eternity which annihilates time, and reduces the shining of the sun to a point, it is of unspeakable importance. And when you have told the number who tread the thronged streets in a single year, — when you have weighed the value of a single soul, in God's estimation, — when you have told the measure of its joys or its woes in the coming eternity, you have told us how important it is that the Gospel of Christ, in all its living power, should come and take hold of the great city.

III. *We want religion in the great city, to sanctify its wealth.*

Wealth is as much the creation and the gift of God, as are health, talents, or the soul itself. It is designed to be the servant of man, to aid him to be more thankful, to do more

good, and to pass his pilgrimage on earth surrounded by comforts. We need not say that it is adapted to all these ends, nor that, when perverted, it becomes a corrupter, and will turn the beautiful plains of Jordan into a loathsome pool of stagnant water. No people have been found who could stand before luxuries, — no arm of human power strong enough to resist them, when unsanctified wealth pours them in upon a people. No nation has yet had a name which might not be washed into its grave by the waves of prosperity.

All cities that are great in population, have, and must have, a vast amount of wealth. They are the tunnels through which commerce, on one side, and agriculture and manufactures, on the other, pour their stores: and these points, where all these exchange hands, and take their destination, must become wealthy. These channels will be deeper in some cities than in others; but in all great commercial cities, wealth must be so abundant, that, at a moment's warning, it can move any thing, and bend to its will, any circumstances. It must also be accumulating, and the business and population must continue to

increase, for the moment the waters begin to slacken, the tide begins to ebb, and the prosperity of that city is usually on the wane.

Now the result is, and must be, that an immense amount of wealth will be gathered here, and expended, somehow. If religion does not reach the hearts of those who possess this wealth, their example and influence will go, much of it, at least, for fashion, for luxury, for the pride of life; and "every man," in the language of the prophet, "will walk in a vain show." But it is not merely that so much wealth is lost, which might be used to cultivate the mind and the heart of the human family, but it becomes a positive corrupter. Can Justice always hold her scales with a steady hand, when a high priest of Mammon may at all times have access even to her secret chambers? Can Law hold the sword with a firm grasp when wealth has put gloves on his hands, and paved his halls with gold? Can independence of character remain, when the features of honest poverty, united to great moral worth, are hooted from society, and a man is weighed only by his property? The tendency, and the great danger in the large

city are, that wealth can purchase a cloak so ample, that it will cover all sins, so that the head may be carried loftily, when the heart is utterly worthless and rotten.

But let the Gospel come in with its full power, and it is possible even for the rich man to enter heaven — for with God all things are possible. Let it come here, and this silver and gold become the acknowledged property of God, and it shall not all go to rear theatres, and to furnish beautiful coverings, by which to conceal the breathing-holes of hell; it shall not all go to adorn the gaming-table, and to ensnare the soul in the meshes of a net very seldom broken; — it shall not all go to gild the chariot of splendor, to increase the gaudy magnificence of trappings, and to out-do fancy herself, in decking the saloon of the wealthy; — No, no, — a part of it shall go to give bread to the orphan, and shelter to the widow; it shall go to bring the mind of the nation into contact with pure knowledge; ay, and wealth shall not disdain to lay his hand on the Bible, and carry it to the destitute; nor shall he refuse to say to the servants of God, “I cannot preach the Gospel,

but I can give you bread, and I can feed the press, and I can provide the ship, and you can go for me and preach the unsearchable riches of the love of Christ to a dying world."

The boy in his poverty has been known to come to the great city, and wait upon the table of the wealthy; — and he has lived to see the day when he became master of wealth, and his own master's sons, — their property scattered to the winds, — have come and desired, and actually obtained, the station which he first occupied! And why do the rich thus go down, and property thus change hands? Because, if there be not religion to govern the heart, wealth is acquired under the curse of God, and the bags which he does not bless will be full of holes, and even the waters of Egypt, under the frown of God, become blood. In vain do you look for any other power to control wealth; and if the Gospel of Christ come not in to sanctify the wealth that rolls into the great city, that city becomes the hot-bed of sin and crime, and moral death seizes upon all classes; and those who here toss on beds of luxury, will hereafter lie down in everlasting burnings.

IV. *The Gospel is needed in the large city, on account of the multitudes of great and powerful minds there gathered.*

There are two kinds of compensation, without which you cannot induce men to do the most difficult of all things — make great mental efforts. The one is high excitement; the other is the reward of money. When these are both to be found, there the strongest, keenest, most powerful minds come together. There they encounter each other — there they wrestle together — there they run the race side by side. In large cities are the great questions moved, discussed, decided upon, and settled; and these demand the highest kind of mental discipline, the keenest perception of things, and the loftiest sweep of intellect, and mental vision. Here, perhaps more cases of vast importance are discussed and settled, in a single week, than in a large area of country, in a whole generation. Here the highest kind of professional skill is called for; here is excitement, to draw out the stores, and the strength of mind, even if the body sinks into an early grave, under the pressure; and here is wealth to compensate exertion, in the palpable reward of money.

From the great city have gone forth the eloquence that has startled, moved, and altered the destinies of nations; the investigations in science and learning, which have gradually changed the whole face of society; the improvements of art, which have thrown the world forward centuries at a single leap; discoveries in medicine, which have alleviated the woes of countless myriads; and the decisions in law, which have settled great national principles, and given stability to the whole of society. Even in these throngs of men, does poetry often seem to thrive, and the waters of Helicon have not unfrequently been known to gush from paved streets and narrow lanes.

Those powerful minds which have been the astonishment of their species, which have influenced the destinies of all nations, though not commonly born in the great city, have gone there, to feel the pressure of that excitement which could draw out their strength, and to find a theatre suitable on which to act.

It always has been so, that the most wonderful creations of the pencil have been brought to light in the great city;—the sculpture that almost breathes, has been perfected

there ; — the mind of Archimedes has solved its problems there ; — the muse of Homer has sung, and the genius of Shakspeare has invented there ; and the cool mind of Blackstone has gone there to deduce its irrefragable conclusions. And probably it always will be so.

Here comes in our argument, or plea for religion. What is the influence of these great, keen, powerful minds upon the world ? They will gather here, educated, and disciplined, and they will act ; and they will send out over the nation, and over the earth, the results of what they think and feel.

Suppose they are infidels. I say nothing about their personal influence in the admiring circles in which they are almost idolized, — this will be but temporary ; but they will stamp the bitter influence of the infidel's heart upon the page that is stereotyped, and that is to live after they are dead ; — they will pour out streams tainted with what they feel, which will flow over the community. The sneer at what is sacred and holy, will find a corner in the medical book ; in the note in the law-book, — on the bright page of fresh literature, — in

the sweet flow of poetry, — in the widely-circulated periodical: and there the serpent will live, and there it will fascinate, and there it will blight and destroy, when the mind that hatched it, has long since passed away, to the retributions of eternity.

Suppose these great minds — this concentration of talent — be brought under the direct influence of religion; what then is the result? They will give their great strength, and their successful efforts, to sustain the majesty of law; they will put forth their best efforts to instruct and raise men so that they can govern themselves, and thus feel the restraints of law less and less; and when they move men, they will move them right, and to do the right things; and when they lay their strong hand on what is to become permanent and binding upon society, they will weigh carefully and accurately; and when they send out their influence upon mankind, and subscribe their names to that which will be influencing men in future years, they will do it in the fear of God, and feel that they must answer for what they do at the judgment-day.

Oh! could the Gospel come into the great

city, and sanctify the talent and the mind there concentrated, it would reach the very fountains of influence, and do for society more than we can compute. These minds are passing on to eternity, and others are rushing in to take their places; and so it will be; and God is saying, by his providence, "these minds — these noble vessels — should be mine; they should be vessels of mercy, — they should be holy, and then they will add many a crown of life to the multitude of the redeemed in heaven!"

V. We need religion in the great city, because it is the source of the fashions of the land.

God has made all the luxuries of life to be perishable; while the necessities are more permanent. He knew that men would set their hearts on having beautiful coverings for the body, and, if in their power, multitudes would expend their lives and property in accumulating a rich ward-robe, to be handed down to posterity. He therefore created the little moth, and bid him go and stand at the door of the ward-robe, and consume what would else become a heavy curse upon man.

This method of gratifying the pride of the heart has, therefore, been cut off: and the vainest man living has no desire to have it engraved on his tombstone, that he left so many garments to his heirs.

But pride and vanity could not be driven away from superintending the dress, by the moth; and, instead of seeing how long they can keep a garment, the problem now is, to see how short a time it can remain, before it shall be too unfashionable to be seen. But as vanity never had a very popular name, she stands behind the curtain, and her voice is denominated Fashion; and this becomes as real a deity as was ever dreaded and worshipped. Her laws seem wholly capricious, but he would be called a despot indeed, who could hope to be obeyed half as implicitly.

The home, the temple, and the altar of Fashion, is the great city. There she is sure to have votaries that are numerous;—there are her richest offerings;—there her priests and priestesses are warming over her shrine, and inspired and maddened by her breath. If opposition is made, Argument wields his club in vain; Reason raises his sober, manly

voice in vain ; Ridicule throws his arrows in vain ; Satire snaps his lash in vain ; for Fashion, when these are panting with their efforts to dethrone her, has but to raise her finger, and the crowd rush to do her bidding. Multitudes live only to watch her nod ; and the greatest fear which heaven, earth, or hell can cause, is the fear lest it should be supposed that they *could* be guilty of violating a single rule, or neglecting a single whisper of Fashion. Among all the tyrants that ever afflicted the human race, there never was one whose commands were so imperious, — whose sceptre of iron was so heavy, — whose frown was so awful, or whose look was so withering. I dare not call hard names ; nor do I wish, on this occasion, to make war upon her ; for he must be a hardy man indeed, who would deliberately cross swords with her, even if he might stand in the pulpit to strike. But I say there is *one* arm that is stronger than hers ; and there is one power, and only one, that is stronger than Fashion. The Gospel of Christ dares sometimes neglect, and even resist her commands. While thousands and thousands in the city are waiting around her shrine, to see

what she will next demand, and while ten times that number, in all the extended country, are waiting to follow in the train,— and while nothing is so expensive, nothing so uncomfortable, nothing so hard to breathe in, as to cause a moment's hesitation about its adoption,— the fear of God can deliver all these slaves from their cruel bondage.

Suppose now that for one year, the Spirit of God should be poured out on the capital of France, and should fully baptize that multitude with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. What would be the results? The fashions of the whole earth would be altered, reduced, as to expense, and every way simplified. No arithmetic can tell the amount of money saved in a single year. One hundred millions a year, would be a small calculation for what would be saved in this country alone. It is almost incredible how much may, and does, depend upon the decisions of one of the high-priests of fashion there, when that decision is to determine whether half a yard of cloth more, or less, shall go into a garment, or whether the needle shall put another sprig into its curious productions. Millions of money hang upon every such decision.

But the time will come when holiness unto the Lord shall be written upon the bells of the horses, *i. e.*, when all fashions shall be under the control of the religion of the Bible ; and just so far as this religion does come into the great city, and take hold of the human heart, in that proportion is the soul delivered from the thralldom of fashion.

We speak not merely of the expense to which Fashion puts individuals and families, but we speak of the time it takes to chase her shadows ; — we speak of the intellect that is frozen and benumbed, of the affections which are absorbed, and which she remorselessly consumes ; — we speak of that awful spell upon society by which home is made a strange place, and, indeed, nothing but a dressing-place ; — which takes the mother's heart away, and puts the heart of the ostrich in its place, — which can make God's image the cold temple of folly, — which can make God's Bible, and God's Sabbath, the food for contempt and mockery, and which can shut the soul away from the appeals that come from the grave, and can substitute the mummeries of fashion, even for the real wail of sorrow

over departed friends, and which can bar the soul from the calls of mercy, inviting her to heaven.

If there be yet one mercy to be received from the Bible, pertaining to this life, greater than all others yet bestowed, it will be given on that day, when the Gospel of Christ shall go into the great city, and make Fashion leave her throne, and come and sit at the feet of Jesus. Then will men be free indeed, and then will the narrow pathway to the skies be crowded with pilgrims.

VI. *We need the Gospel in great cities, because these control the destinies of the nation.*

The merchants and the men of business, from all parts of the land, are constantly going to the great city ; and they all feel, and all carry away, somewhat of the city's influence. The crowds of men who merely pass through it, catch a little of what is there. If the city be the green-house of crime, and the centre of all that demoralizes and pollutes, the tainted streams are for ever sending out their desolating waters.

Take a single item of influence — the press

of the great city. But a very small part of the influence of the press is expended at home, and probably every great city reaches, and makes an impression every week, upon a million of minds. If you seek what will corrupt and debase, you find it in the city press ; — if you want what, it would seem, must be gathered from the gutter and the sink, you find it there ; — if you want blasphemy, as vulgar and as low as the dark world could invent, you find it there ; — if you want the mind fed with folly and garbage, you find it there ; and if you want mind, concentrated, decided, powerful, and almost as irresistible as fate, you find it connected with the city press. Let it be united, and no combination can stand before it, whether its will be to put up or to put down. To this ten thousand minds daily look, and by it are daily influenced. The earliest news hastens to the city ; the most startling and thrilling exhibitions of depravity are there daily made and reported ; there the sagest conjectures, as to the future are found, and the most comprehensive grasp of intellect is seen and felt, and, what is great and stirring elsewhere, is tame and meagre in the great city.

Who does not know that Rome gave not merely *laws* to that gigantic empire, but that Rome was the empire ; so that when, by corruption, she sank under the weight of her own sins, the empire fell as if a shock of palsy had smitten every ligament and fibre ? Who does not know, that in the great population of France, Paris is not only the key-stone of the kingdom, but that Paris is France, and the nation rushes into republicanism, or into the Reign of Terror, or leaps into despotism, just as that city says ? Who does not know that the metropolis of New-England, then but a small heart to send out such great pulsations, gave the tone, and made the decision which separated this nation from its parent country ? And at the present time, when you think of England, you involuntarily find yourself thinking of London, and in the mental vision, that city shuts out every thing else. It is the mighty heart of that mighty nation, and throb as it may, it sends its own pulsations through all parts of the kingdom, and of the world. The government is there ; the wealth is there ; the press is there ; the mind is there ; and the power concentrated there, sends forth its de-

cisions loud as mighty thunderings, and terrible as the voice of many waters. When it sends out its Sunday newspapers, read by at least three hundred thousand, — when it pours out its cars and carriages on that holy day, — when it swells in pride and vanity, though it makes Royalty the puppets of the exhibition, that great city cannot but be decided and irresistible in its influence upon the kingdom.

And so it must be with all great cities; and in proportion to their wealth and population will they decide the character of the nation. Let them be filled with the influences of religion, and with the waters of life, and the whole nation bathes in them; let them become corrupt, — the depositories of all that is polluted in the land, — and they are the great slaughter-houses of the soul, and the recruiting-places of the world of darkness.

The parents who live here, and the parents who send their sons here, — the absent mothers, who spend sleepless nights, praying that their children may be shielded from temptation, are not the only people who are interested in the moral character of the great city. The whole land is interested.

Here, unprotected and unsuspecting youth walks over concealed pit-falls, — and what can throw a shield over him, to protect him from temptation — and what hand will grasp his, and keep him from falling? Here mind is gathered, excited, restless, sleepless, — and what can make it feel its responsibility to live for man and for God? What can prevent the great city from becoming an awful charnel-house — what — if not the religion of the heart, — the religion of the Bible?

O! what mind will come and cool the feverish, refresh the weary, invigorate the feeble, give nerve to the strong for high and noble doing, except the breath of the Almighty? And when you think of this ever-changing mass, — these hopes constantly withering, — when you think that out of every thirty or forty whom you see thronging these streets, one must every year drop into the grave, and be forgotten, — will you say that we are out of the way when we plead, that if there be one spot on earth beyond all others, which needs the religion of Christ, in all its power, that spot is the great city?

Upon other spots sweeter dews may fall;

over other spots brighter rain-bows may hang ; around other spots there may be more of poetry and of romance, — more that seems like the garden of Eden before the serpent entered it, — but at no point do the arrows of death fall so rapidly, and with such fearful certainty, — upon no point on the footstool of God is the work of demoralization and death, going on with such terrible power, — and over no spot, are the shouts of spirits accursed so loud, as that point which we call the great city.

When the great city, in modern times, throws off the authority of God, and becomes so proud as to take its fate into its own hands, the angel of woe does not now come as he came to Sodom, with the phial of wrath in his hand, — not as he paused over Babylon, with the mill-stone in his hand, — not as he stood in Jerusalem, waving the drawn sword, — not in the shock of war, as he hurled Nineveh from her old foundations, and trampled Jerusalem under foot, — but he *now* comes unseen, and cuts the cords which bind men to conscience ; and the judgments of God come in the shape of a hardening heart and a seared conscience, and the city is cursed by being

only a wide gate-way into the world of eternal sinning.

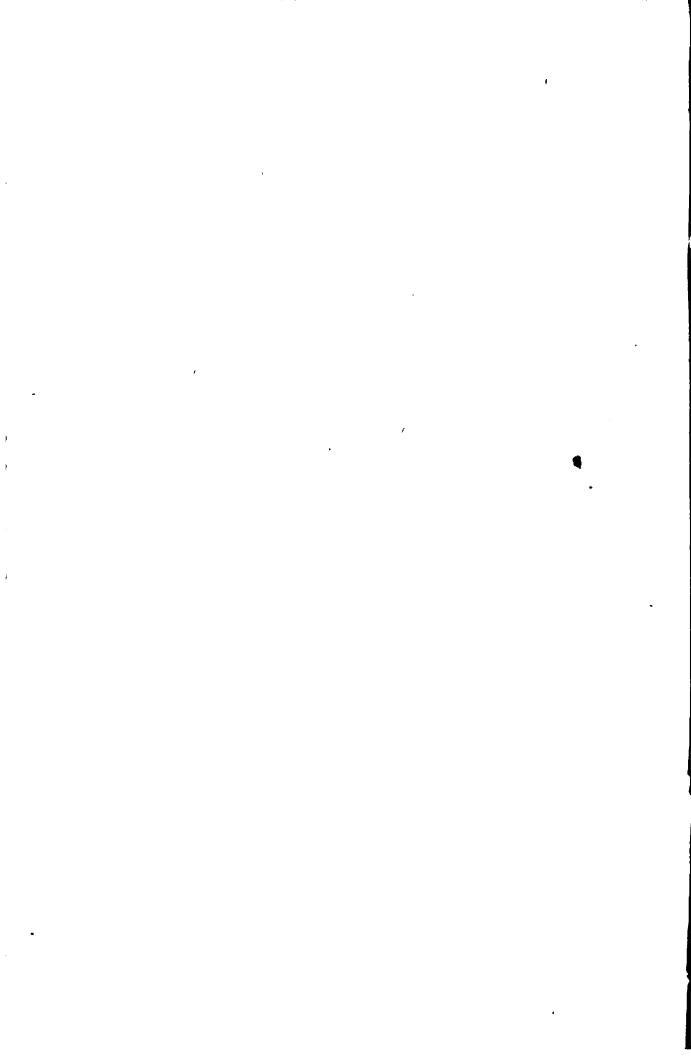
Once you could see the sword bathed in heaven, and you could hear the angel of death, as he folded his wings and read the doom of this and that great city. But now the work is doing, and is done, and we hardly realize that God is dealing with us ere the curse is upon us.

Who have been left to wallow in sin, — to dare the Almighty, and to become drunk with the blood of martyrs? Where has the cross been the most speedily erected, and the very tragedies of hell been acted over? You know it has been in the great city : and with these God will reckon with the most fearful accuracy.

Oh ! the city — the great city ! — thou personification of all that is great, and splendid, and glorious, and magnificent among mortals, thou hast no walls to protect thee, no gates of brass to shut any thing out from thee ; — but when I think of thy multitudes of busy dreamers, each of whom might shine as the sun in the firmament of heaven, to all eternity ; — when I think of thy wealth, which if conse-

crated to Christ might make the distant mountain and valley ring for joy ; — when I think of thy talents, which might devise and execute a highway for our God ; — when I think of thy fashions and follies, which are the sea in which such multitudes float down to ruin ; — when I think of the cold graves, which hide so many of thy sons and daughters every week ; — when I think of that multitude of souls, so feverish, so restless, so longing for somebody to show them something good ; — when I think of thy sins, so green, so constantly crying to heaven for vengeance, — and when I think of that long, long eternity which we must shortly meet, — I tremble, and bless God that with a feeble voice, though with the impotency of dust and ashes, I may speak to these my hearers, and beg their prayers, their sympathies, and their hearts, for the work of saving the great cities of our land. I shall try, God permitting, on a future occasion, to tell them what they may do, and how they may do it. In the mean time, let it be written on the heart, that the man who lives and acts as a member of the great city, has a vast responsibility resting upon him. He has abundant

opportunities to do good ; and fearful will be his account, if he neglects and wastes them. The ship in which he has taken his passage to the eternal world, is freighted with treasures which worlds could not purchase. All around are the rocks, and the quicksands, and the ten thousand dangers. This cargo can be landed safely — and everlasting songs of gratitude shall be poured upon the head of every one who is faithful ; but fearfully will he meet his doom, who lived and died on such a spot, and all he did, was to help men to unfit themselves for heaven.



LECTURE II.

TEMPTATIONS PECULIAR TO CHRISTIANS IN GREAT CITIES.

“Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” —
1 PET. i. 6.

WE all understand that a temptation is an enticement, or an inducement to do what God and an enlightened conscience forbid. As this is a state of moral probation, it is the design of God to allow us to be surrounded by temptations, while we live in this world. Sometimes these come from our intercourse with our fellow-men, sometimes from our own corrupted hearts within us, and sometimes from the wiles of the great tempter. Sometimes we are overtaken suddenly by a temptation, as was David, and the same temptation does not again meet us during the whole of our life. Sometimes we are so situated that the temptation returns every day, or very often.

There are also certain periods or situations

in life, when we are exposed to particular kinds of temptations. Those which beset the young man, — those which beset the middle-aged man, — and those which beset the old man, may be unlike, and yet each is adapted to the particular period of life.

There are also particular places in which temptations are heavier than in others. When the armed band was heard rushing and shouting down from the city's gate, to take Christ in the garden, in the darkness of night, the temptation to the disciples to flee away, was greater than if a single officer had arrested Christ in the day-time. When the rulers commanded the Apostles not to mention the name of Jesus any more, on pain of imprisonment and death, the temptation to hold their peace was much greater than if, like the Bereans, they were all noble-minded enough to search the scriptures, to see if these things were so. And when the Hebrew Christians were made a spectacle to angels and to men—when the Christians were scattered abroad, and became “strangers,” because thus driven away from home and country, the temptation to apostatize and deny Christ, was vastly

greater than if they had peace and quietness, — every man sitting under his own vine and fig-tree, having none to molest or make afraid.

The fact that some situations and conditions of life are more exposed to temptations than others, is so plain and so universally admitted, that no parent thinks of sending a child from home, without inquiring to what temptations he is to be exposed, and how he is to be shielded. The scattered Christians addressed in my text, were spoken to as those who had great heaviness or sorrow, in consequence of manifold temptations. Theirs were of a kind very different from those to which we are now exposed; and yet it is doubtful if theirs were more severe than ours. Certainly theirs were not so permanent. The hand of persecution would one day slacken its hold upon the sword; and the temptations arising from this cause would one day cease; but those to which Christians who now inhabit large cities are exposed, never cease, till life ceases. When you enter the whirl, you must not only meet with these, and meet them every hour, and at every step, but you must meet them as long as you live. They are

manifold, — their name is legion, — and if you are really a Christian, they will bring upon you great heaviness and much tribulation.

My object, in this discourse, will be *to point out some of the more obvious temptations of Christians, which are peculiar to the great city.*

I. Christians in great cities are peculiarly tempted to overlook the guilt of sin.

We all know that familiarity with any thing has a wonderful effect upon our feelings; and that it is a principle in human nature, that what is in itself revolting, will, by familiarity, cease to disgust. This principle is of such universal application, that I am more at a loss to know where to begin, than to find illustrations.

The first time the medical student enters the dissecting-room, he has a feeling excited very nearly allied to that of shuddering. The mangled dead are strewn around, and those who hold the dissecting-knife are there, silent as the dead, as if that were no place for cheerfulness. The images which he sees haunt him after leaving the room. But in a few

years, this same man can shut himself up there for days, and have scarcely a feeling revolt, or an unpleasant image remain upon his mind. He can walk through the hospital, crowded with the sick and the dying, and rendered dismal by the groans of distress, or the ravings of madness, and he can do this as his business, and yet sit down to dinner with an appetite as keen as if he had been visiting the abodes of health and cheerfulness. We call this familiarity with distress or suffering, by which we become unsusceptible to emotion, "getting hardened to it," and we very soon thus "get hardened" to it!

An undertaker, in one of our large cities, who, on an average, buries twelve every day, informed the speaker that the being with the dead, handling them, and the like, was a pleasing employment to him; and no face could be graver than his, when he added, "it was a pleasant business!"

The young soldier, who first joins his company, has never voluntarily inflicted a wound upon any human being. He has never seen human blood flow, and has never beheld distress created by design. The first oath of his com-

rade startles him. At the beat of the drum, which, for the first time, calls him to face the enemy, he turns pale. But he need be in the army but a very few years, and he can witness the falling of men around him — see the mangled remains of his fellows — hear the groans of death, and see all the cruelties of the battle-field, and even close with the enemy, bayonet to bayonet, and slay his foes man by man, and yet, at the close of the day, take his meal, and lie down to sleep with as much indifference, as if he had been engaged in reaping the harvest of wheat. This is almost literally getting hardened to misery and woe, and is a clear illustration of the principle.

This, I am aware, is insensibility produced by familiarity with physical suffering; — but who does not know that familiarity with what is morally wrong, will have precisely the same effect upon the moral feelings? Why does the pure-minded boy shudder, when he first joins the ship's crew at their awful profaneness, and yet, in a few years, he himself become as profane, and as blasphemous, as the most abandoned? And why does the parent dread to have his children associate with the vile and the guilty? We all know why.

Now in great cities it is nearly impossible not to have the mind in almost constant contact with sin and crime. There, the Sabbath is trampled upon, fearlessly, constantly, and shamelessly, by the high and the low. And do you need proof that this familiarity with Sabbath-breaking, destroys something of the sacredness of that day? Walk the streets of Paris on the Sabbath, where the shops are all open, where the streets are thronged by a mighty population let loose to amusements,—where the military parade, and where all strive to be gay, and tell us, if you can there revere the Sabbath as you do when in the little village among the mountains, where no noise but the “church-going bell” breaks the sweet silence of the day?

Christians in business, too, or who are engaged in politics, are tempted to go to the post-office on the Sabbath. To what extent this is done, is not for me to say; but I am fearfully apprehensive, it is more common than most suspect. It will be an awful disclosure at last; and if there be a sin by which the Christian *can* openly, daringly, and inexcusably insult his God, wound his brethren,

dishonor his Savior, and grieve the Spirit of God, this is such a sin; and woe to the man who is to answer for it at the last great Day.

In great cities, sin is for ever before the eyes. Here are mighty crimes—deeds of darkness—the reports of which you may read in the morning. Here are the frauds,—the cheatings on a wholesale scale—done openly, and almost daily, by those, too, who claim great respectability of character. Here old-fashioned Honesty is pushed aside, and made to yield up what belongs to his clients, that Fashion may deck herself with the spoils, and walk through the streets with an imposing stride. Here you may see cunning constantly at work to evade justice, to baffle law, and to make the laws themselves like the webs of spiders,—admirable to catch flies, and small insects, while wasps and hornets break through and escape.

In great cities, too, the temptation to feel no responsibility to God, how money is spent, is very great, and very distressing. When we go to the dwellings of professed Christians, and can there see no difference in their dwelling or furniture from the most worldly man in

the street, — when we see that they live up to the very last point of their ability, and expand and contract just as the tide of their business happens to ebb or flow, — when we see those who cannot even do this, envious and jealous of those who can, — when they live just like the world, and do like them in spending their money, I confess I have great fears, lest the conscience has become dead on this point. What multitudes of professed Christians feel that it is necessary for them to keep up what they call a “certain style,” but who do not feel that it is necessary for them to contribute any thing to save a world for which Christ died! How many feel, too, and make this very excuse, when called to contribute to send the Gospel to the dying, that they must and ought to be excused, because their style of living consumes all they can get! I think I make no mistake, when I say that Christians in large cities are in very great danger of feeling that they are not responsible to God for the amount of money which they spend upon themselves. I have no desire to enter into particulars; but when you see Christians living in houses, each of which would give

from fifty to two hundred thousand Bibles to the destitute, — when you see them making entertainments, each of which would support one, two, or even three missionaries of the cross for a year, — when you see them wearing garments, each of which would almost build a church in some waste place of Zion, we may be sure there is danger lest we be spoiled by the philosophy of this world. It will not do to say that this is nothing for which we are accountable; for at the Judgment-day, we must answer to God for all this.

Now does all this familiarity with crime, with dishonesty, with throwing off responsibility, tend to strengthen our regard to justice, or our fear lest we go off upon ground which God hath forbidden?

Familiarity with sin, too, begins early in large cities; and if God, in his providence, should take off the veil which covers all, we should be astonished at the crimes which the children of Christian parents practise in early life, and at what practices are allowed, with hardly a trembling for the consequences. Even those who think they have found the mercy of God in the pardon of their sins, are

apt to speak of the sins of other years with a levity that is fearful. And I have heard Christians speak of sins with which they were once familiar, with an indifference truly amazing, — sins, which, if not sincerely and heartily repented of, will yet sink them into the eternal pit. Most awful are the effects of this constant, every-day familiarity with sin for a long number of years, in benumbing the sensibilities of the soul, and in rendering the conscience stupid. It is sin, squalid or splendid, coming into direct contact with our senses continually, that creates this temptation to feel that sin is of less consequence than it is. When we can hear of sin, see it, and think of it, with almost entire indifference, and such sin as God declares will for ever shut men from heaven, we ought to feel that here we are peculiarly tempted, — and, instead of making the opinions and fashions of men our standard, we ought to go continually to God's word, and see how he views it.

II. *Christians in large cities are peculiarly tempted to engage in worldly amusements.*

By worldly amusements I mean such as are the greatest delight of people who profess to

live only for this world. If I specify cards, balls, and theatres, I shall be sufficiently definite to be understood.

The temptations to engage in these are strong, inasmuch as they are always at hand. You can mention no night in the week, in which you may not find one, or all of these. The advertisements meet you in vulgar capitals at the corners of every street, and they glare upon you in almost every newspaper. There is always the promise of some star — something about which every body talks — something which every body wants to see. The crowds go there, the fashionable go there, youth and beauty go there, — you are sure to get something about which every body can talk, if you go there; and why should not the Christian go? — At least, why should he not go once, or just for this once? Will attending a single ball, — making or attending one card-party, — going to the theatre once, be the death of his soul? He is accused of being too rigid, too morose, and religion is accused of making him unhappy, and now he has the opportunity to show that religion does not have this effect.

And then, these amusements produce, what every human being loves, strong excitement. Who ever spent half the night over the card-table, without knowing there is great excitement before-hand, and at the time? Who ever floated in the atmosphere of the brilliant ball-room, amid music that comes directly and powerfully upon the nerves, without feeling the excitement? Who goes to the theatre, and laughs with comedy, or weeps with tragedy, without feeling excitement? All these amusements fall in with our natural love of excitement. We should find the churches equally thronged, and equally fashionable, if you could there give us the same amount of excitement, and have nothing to do with the conscience. It is the fact that the pulpit deals so much with the awful functions of conscience, that prevents our finding excitement enough in the house of God. Ay, and were it not that woe is unto us if we do not so preach the Gospel that it must sweep the cords of conscience with a heavy hand, we should have no fear but the Church of God could compete with any place of amusement.

Now when the doors are wide open — when

the world around — the great mass of mankind — say there is no harm in these exciting amusements, though they know that they are most thronged by those who live farthest from God, — when they are so very fashionable, that you can hardly mingle with genteel society, unless you fall in with them, — when they are precisely adapted to our natural and strong desire for excitement, is there any thing strange that the Christian should feel it hard that his Bible warns, “touch not, taste not, handle not?” Is it wonderful that some think it is a *little* sin, — a *sin*, to be sure, but so small that God will not notice it, — that many feel that they may pluck the fruit this once, — that many think they are not known to do it, and think it is all buried from the eye of their fellow-Christians? There is nothing wrong in it, say some. Nothing wrong to engage in worldly amusements! Why, then, do not the best Christians see it so, and pray over it, and fall in? Why does not the minister of the Gospel lead off in the dance, — have a private box at the theatre, — a good seat at the circus, and be an adept at the card-table? Nothing wrong! Then why do you never find

a man, or a woman, who indulges in these amusements, who is a praying, devoted, engaged Christian? Why do you find it utterly impossible yourself, to engage in secret prayer, and yet seek these amusements? Alas! we have reason to fear the Day of Judgment will bring out many professors, — more than we now suspect, — who ruined their souls, and lost their God, by means of worldly amusements! And we have no more reason to expect, that the soul that will sell its master for amusements, will ever see heaven, than we have, that Judas, who sold him for gold, will find heaven.

III. *Christians in great cities are peculiarly tempted to neglect the religion of the heart.*

It requires much more labor to roll a stone up a steep hill, than up a hill whose angle of ascent is less; and if the stone be a very smooth one, and the ground very slippery, the labor is still more increased. Who that has lived in the great city only a few years, need be reminded that all good impressions fade away almost as soon as made. A sermon that shall affect an audience so as to abide, and be

remembered for a single week, must be a discourse of singular power. The teaching in the Sabbath-school must be double, in amount of time and labor, to what it is elsewhere. The reason is obvious. All good impressions are transitory and evanescent. The result of experience will be, that the Christian who tries to keep his piety alive, in the city, by the same amount of reading, meditation, and prayer, which would be needed in the country, will soon find himself going backward in the divine life. He will shortly lack spirituality, and grow lean in his soul. In the great city, there are at least ten times the number of things to take off the attention, that there are out of the city; and I shall not be out of the way, if I say that the Christian here needs very much more of faithful closet devotion. But do Christians in the city take so much more time? Are they so careful and particular in the arrangement of their time and plans, as to spend a considerable portion of their time, daily, in the closet?

It is much easier, too, and more agreeable to our natures, to go to public meetings frequently, than to go alone, and commune with

our own hearts, in the secrecy of the closet; and we are tempted to do so. Public lectures are always to be had in the great city, and good lectures too; and may it not be that too many make these a substitute for periodical, faithful examination of the heart? It is much more easy and pleasant to sit and be lectured, and moved by another, than to meet God alone, and open the heart before him. Hence the great danger of positively neglecting intercourse with the heart-searching Spirit in the closet.

Perhaps the very habits of business, so essential to your prosperity in the city, have an unhappy influence upon the religion of the heart. You rise at a stated time in the morning; open your store at a given moment; know to a moment when the mail arrives and closes; must meet your accounts at a given moment; and thus you are in the habit of being punctual and exact. When the moment arrives for you to do this or that, you do it, and then throw it off the mind. And is there not a temptation to treat the duties of the closet in the same way? Do you not sometimes, if not often, go to your closet, and

go through with the solemn duties thereof, with about the same thought and feeling that you perform any duty in business, and thus leave the presence of God, not having realized it? In this way you may be prompt, and punctual, as to time, as you would be to pay a note,—and make it, in both cases, a matter of cold duty. And thus we may have the name of religion, and the form of religion, while the heart is a stranger to its power; and when we place religion on the cold level with business, we may be sure that it will have too slight hold of us, either to subdue the soul or console it.

It is to my purpose here to remark, how very seldom personal, experimental religion, is made the subject of conversation between Christians. The *fact* will not be questioned. How can it be accounted for? Is it because there are so many other topics floating, that we are never at a loss to hear or tell some new thing? But why is not religious experience one of the first topics of conversation? Or, if not among the first, why is it wholly banished? Do we need it less here than elsewhere? Or is it because we are very prone

to neglect the heart, and find it more agreeable to tread upon the surface, than to go as deep as the heart ?

Then as to *reading*, how much stronger is the temptation to lay the hand on the fresh morning paper, and spend some time over that, than over the Book of God ? To keep along with the tide of human events, and yet not have eternal things weigh upon us ? Can it be denied that Christians in great cities are not usually rooted and grounded in the great doctrines of the Bible, and deeply read in theology ? We have access to any amount of books, but the difficulty is that the world — the world is constantly rolling in between us and every thing good. There is a bubble constantly before our eyes. Hence, if you wish to find dressing, fashionable Christians, talking, flippant, superficial professors, you will find them in the great city ; and if you wish to find the ardent, excitable, go-forward professors, you will find them there ; but if you want to find Christians whose piety, like the wheat in the full ear, weighs the head down, I am afraid you will not there find them very common.

The temptation to neglect the heart, too, from the fact that our time is so completely absorbed, is very great. Every man, in the great city, feels that he has about four times as much laid upon him as he can possibly accomplish, so that he feels almost excusable for neglecting his own heart. The father has an expensive family depending upon him, and his time is so absorbed, and his energies are so exhausted, that he cannot be faithful in secret devotion. The mother must keep all the wheels and machinery of her family in motion, and everything must there move with perfect regularity,—except her own opportunities for retirement. Those are any thing but regular. The young man feels that his time is not his own, and he is in danger of hoping that God will not expect much fervency in his closet. And so let the situation be what it may, we feel hurried, overwhelmed with duties, and insensibly drawn away, and kept away, from the duties of the closet. This makes unstable Christians. This makes superficial Christians—Christians who cannot stand against temptation; and who, when temptations come, inquire, not what God will now have them do,

and how he would have them meet them, but how they can shift off responsibility, and make every thing turn to their own advantage. On this point I hardly dare speak all that I feel, lest, if the danger be painted as great as I deem it, you will forget the danger, in wondering over its amazing magnitude.

IV. *Christians in great cities are peculiarly tempted to be uncharitable towards one another.*

Every thing, in the great city, from the tire on the carriage-wheel, to the strongest moral and mental attainments, is tasked to its utmost limits. Nowhere else, does every thing human wear out so fast. Men are in constant, unceasing motion, and a thousand eyes are carelessly thrown upon them; and character, mercantile, mental, religious, — all character is in a state of being acted out continually.

Now go down to one of our wharves, and examine one of those stately ships, which lies so quietly on the bosom of the still waters, — or, as she gently floats down the river. Do you hear any creaking of her joints, perceive any starting of her timbers, any straining of her frame, any giving way in her rigging, or

any opening of her chinks? No; you see no defects; and, if she has weak points, you are unable to say what they are. But keep on her deck till she is out at sea, under full sail, now mounting the waves, now sinking into the trough of the sea, now bending before the gale, and leaping onward, like a war horse, now scudding almost under her bare poles, and now rolling and logging in the swell of a fog, — and how great is the contrast between the ship at sea, and the same ship at the wharf! You now hear the creaking of her joints, — you now see the straining and snapping of her spars, — and you now look upon her as something very different from what you did before she sailed. It is now utterly impossible, by any paint, any varnish, or any gilding, to cover up the defects of that ship. She has her defects of sailing, or of strength, or of something else, and they are now known to every man that treads her decks. She is loaded as heavily as she can be, — is under full press of canvass, — has stormy seas to pass over, — severe tempests to encounter, and it is utterly impossible but that every timber in her should have its strength tested, and severely tested.

Turn your eye now from the ship, and look at her commander. While in harbor his whole character was in repose. He was gentle, and seemed to be a man who could never be moved or disturbed. But now he feels responsible for the ship and her cargo, and all the lives committed to him; and when he has been unable to take an observation for many days, and knows not how near land he may be, nor how near danger, — when in consequence of watching the gale he has not been able to sleep for days, — when a part of his men are on the sick list, and a part are in a state ready for mutiny, can you expect to see him as he was on the shore? Can you expect that he will now show no defects of character? Can he now wear the same placid countenance, use the same deliberate tone of conversation, and manifest the same regard to the feelings of others? No: he is now in trying circumstances, — his character is now drawn out, and, if he shows no defects in it now, he must be more than human.

It is just so with Christian character in great cities. Churches, which, in other places, would be quiet, calm, and peaceful, are here, from

causes to be alluded to hereafter, often strained and chafed. When the ship is under full head-way, every crooked, cross-grained, perverse stick of timber, will show its weakness; and we are in danger of condemning the ship, and pronouncing her unseaworthy, when we know not how deeply she is laden, nor how much her timbers are tried. All her defects are as glaring as noon-day.

The same is true of individual Christians. All our defects of character are known to those who, really, know any thing about us. There is, to be sure, a wide circle, a little beyond that in which we move, which knows nothing about us, and cares nothing about us; but the men who sail in the same ship, know the defects and failings of one another most thoroughly.

Now if we could keep in mind that others know us as well as we do them, all this would be well enough. It would all go to make us watchful, and careful, and humble. But the difficulty is, we turn the large end of the glass towards the faults of others, and thus see them very distinctly, but the small end towards our own defects, and conclude that others see

them look as small as we see them. The consequence, of course, must be, that we have a most accurate inventory of the failings of our brethren, while we are blind to our own. Hence that want of charity, and that severity of judgment, which too often characterize the professed followers of Christ in large cities; and hence the constant blazing abroad the defects of one another. Character, strained, and in full action, is ever before you, and you see all its defects. The joints of the harness are constantly opening, and any man can throw in an arrow, though he draw the bow at venture. Character is the easiest thing in the world to talk about. We know, and we must know each other, most fully, situated as we are, in large cities; but this, instead of making us uncharitable, censorious, and severe towards each other, ought to lead us to remember that every man lives in a glass house, and that, therefore, we ought to be very watchful, and very careful.

V. Christians in great cities are peculiarly tempted to be jealous of one another.

Suppose you find yourself walking in the centre of a mighty forest. As you pass along,

you hear a groan, and, on looking around you, see an aged tree, broken and crushed, lying by your side. It lifts its head, and begs you to listen to its story. "I was once," says the tree, "a single tree, standing by myself, in the middle of the field. I stood out, and reared my head aloft, in beautiful proportions. The sun-shine of morning first saluted me, and the sun-light of evening lingered on my head. The cattle came to me for shelter, the birds of the air hastened to my branches, and there poured out their songs, and there found a home for their young,—and the traveller stopped to gaze and admire my form and beauty. The artist took out his pencil, and carried away my picture. But I felt that there were too few to admire me, and I prayed to be placed where I could be seen by my race. At length an unseen hand took me up silently, and I found myself in the middle of the great forest, and surrounded by ten thousand trees, all equally lofty, and equally beautiful. Oh! I cried, I shall now be so happy! I shall now have enough to gaze upon me, and admire my graces! But, alas! how was I mistaken! I soon found that I was only *one* among a mul-

titude of trees, each of which had as much beauty, and as much pride and vanity, as myself. Now no one stopped to gaze at my form — no one took out his pencil to copy my proportions. I could be only one among thousands. In vain I held my head aloft — others could rear theirs higher. In vain I spread my branches, for the birds to come to me as formerly ; there were ten thousand such branches spread before they reached me. In vain I rustled my leaves to court the sweet breezes of evening — they were all absorbed before they reached me. In vain I tried to catch the beams of the morning or evening sun — my envious companions wooed and received every beam before they reached me. I found every tree endowed with as much sensibility, and pride, and vanity, as myself, and every one was striving to gain a share of that notice which must be shared among us all. Thus I have spent my life, envious and jealous of all the rest, and the rest envious and jealous of me ; and when, for my pride and sins, the Spirit of the forest sent his lightnings, and destroyed me, as you see, there were none to pity, — none to lament, — none

to mourn over me. Traveller, you have my history."

It is precisely so with human character : and the man who stands isolated, and alone, in the country, and who there receives attention and deference, wonders why he cannot receive the same in the great city. What is the reason why there is such a constant struggle to outdo one another in the race ? Why is it that one determines to build a house so peculiar, that men must stop and gaze at it, or to ride in a carriage that will attract notice, or to have furniture or dress that will be remembered long enough to be spoken of to the next visiter ? Why is it that no expense is spared to take advantage of the first fashion that arrives, and be sure to seize upon something that will be noticed, as beautiful, or expensive, or peculiar ? The reason is not that we have so much property that we can afford all this, — not that we are any better sheltered or clothed, — but that we are surrounded by such multitudes of men, all running the same race, that it is very difficult to do any thing that will attract attention enough to convince ourselves and others, that we are not wholly overlooked in the community.

Now no Christian is sanctified, but in part; and very few are so sanctified, that they can bear to be overlooked or unnoticed. Hence, when they see that one of their number is, by any means, attracting attention, — is considerably noticed, and they are left behind, the feeling of jealousy is very likely to be awakened. Does such a one give more liberally than others, — does he pray, or speak more acceptably in public, — does he, on any account, receive more notice than others, — does he exercise any acquired influence, — the feeling of jealousy is awakened, and, almost unconsciously to himself, the complaining Christian takes the sharpest of all weapons by which to remove the envied one, — and that weapon is the tongue !

The very slight hold which we have upon society, in the great city, tends to create the same feelings. To-day you see a man who seems to be the centre of a vast circle, the main-spring of a great business. To-morrow he drops into the grave, — the crowd pause a moment, and then the tide rolls on as if he had never lived. How soon is his name passed away ! How soon is he forgotten !

All things at once move on as they did before, and a hundred are ready to fall in and fill the vacancy. Not so out of the city. There, when a strong man falls, it takes a long time ere the loss is forgotten, or his place is filled. He lingers and lives in the memory of all the generation who knew him. For thirty or forty years his name is mentioned with respect and emotion. But in the great city, we are every day taught that no man is so great, or so important, that he cannot be spared. We go and come, and are mortified to find that it makes but little difference whether we go or stay. The tide rolls on unceasingly. We go from one city to another, and from one church to another, and it makes but little difference in the great tide that sweeps onward. The world around us are too busy to notice us, and this very slight hold upon men, which we obtain in the great city, is a constant source of anxiety and jealousy, lest we lose all the hold we have. It is a very hard lesson, even for the Christian, to learn, that he is of but little consequence; and we are very careful to guard against any thing that would teach us that lesson.

Hence, multitudes of professed Christians, who have never examined the philosophy of their feelings, are for ever on the look-out, to see how they may do something by which to attract attention, or to see how they may retain what they have already acquired. It is a kind of property, very difficult to obtain, and very slippery when once possessed, and hence it becomes a source of unceasing anxiety.

For these two reasons, all dwellers in great cities, and Christians among the rest, are peculiarly tempted to be jealous. Nothing can make an individual tolerably comfortable, in such a situation, except, either a consciousness that he is noticed and distinguished, for something which he possesses, or else, so much piety, that he can be contented to pass on in the crowd, conscious of the approbation of God, and satisfied with that. Need I say that the latter is the only safe, the only wise, and the only real Christian course? And unless the Christian takes this course, he has a thorny path. He will be in danger, all the way through life, of making himself and others wretched by his jealousies. He will be con-

stantly convincing the world, of what they are always ready to assert, that there is not power enough in the Gospel to make its professors better than others. The cherishing of this feeling will set families at variance, — will rend the church of God, — will grieve the Spirit of God, — and, amid the greatest privileges for ripening for heaven, will leave the soul to barrenness and death. It may not be pleasant to have the mirror reflect the image so distinctly and so accurately ; but, I believe, very few Christians will deny the accuracy of the reflection.

And here I must allude to a feeling not uncommon, that the Gospel ought to do away the artificial distinctions of society, which prevail in a great city. Many good people seem to stumble at these, and feel like waging a war of extermination upon them. An individual, or a family, moves in a certain circle. There are other circles, above him, from which he is silently excluded. He makes no complaint. But that individual, or that family, become hopefully converted to God. They unite with the Church ; and now the complaint is, that they meet at the communion-

table, and in the prayer-meeting, those who move in a higher circle, and still they are excluded. The complaint is, that members of the same church will meet me, and speak to me, at the Lord's table, and in the prayer-meeting, and yet, when they meet me in the streets, or in company, will not notice me, or even speak as if they knew me.

Now, whatever I may attempt hereafter, I shall not here discuss these artificial distinctions in city life; but I think I can certainly show you, that the complaint is not well founded. When you demand to be admitted into a higher circle, and to be noticed more by those above you, because you are a Christian, what is it but demanding that the Gospel shall at once be a temporal benefit to you, and shall at once lift you up into more fashionable society, and make you more respected than before? But does the Gospel ever promise this? Was it ever designed thus to reward you for embracing it? Surely not. When God sends his Spirit, and converts your soul, he does not promise that you shall be more genteel, or more noticed, but that you shall rather be thought less of, and that you

shall be disciplined, mortified, and trained up, for a heaven of holiness and of glory. The very thing which you demand removed, is essential, probably, to your discipline. Who would not be tempted to embrace the Gospel, or at least, to come into the visible Church of Christ, if this would at once cut away the cords which bind him down to obscurity, and raise him above his present condition? Could there be a temporal motive more enticing, by which to make hypocrites? And when I hear Christians complaining that they are not raised in human society, and are not more noticed because they are Christians, I feel that they little understand what they are saying. All artificial distinctions in society, not founded solely on moral worth, are, of course, made for worldly ends, and are for this life; and I can no more regret that a disciple of Jesus is not rewarded for becoming a Christian with these, than I can regret that he is not rewarded with money. It would be giving him the vanities of earth, and the very thing that would be most likely to quench love to God, and ruin his soul for ever. They that fear the Lord shall want no good thing; and if you

are not raised up into genteel society, and more noticed by becoming a Christian, you may feel certain that it is not a good thing. Have we not reason to fear there is too much of this kind of murmuring among Christians, and that many charge it upon the pride of those above them that they do not notice them more, while they forget it may be pride that makes the demand, and that murmurs, because the demand is not granted? I should not dare, if it were in my power, to add one more worldly motive for a man to become a Christian, than are already offered. I know that in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew, — neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, — Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but that Christ is all in all; *i. e.*, the heaven held out by the Gospel is such, that the distinctions of earth are not worth even mentioning, nor sighing after, if we have them not. Wealth is the main thing that creates the artificial distinctions of a great city, and the Gospel never attempted to grapple with Mammon in this public manner. The Gospel goes from heart to heart, and attempts to sanctify men individually, and silently, — and unless

this is first done, it is in vain to attempt to break into the magic circle which Mammon draws around him, and say that the lines of that circle shall all fade away at once.

Nor must I, because I am rich, and can ride in my carriage, if I please, or live in great splendor, imagine that therefore I am entitled to great consideration and influence among my fellow-disciples. This, too, is bringing the religion of Jesus as an auxiliary to aid me in climbing into notice. It ought to be kept in mind, that it is moral character alone, which entitles a man to influence in the Church of God, and that Paul, while making tents, was as much to be respected, as when he was travelling with two hundred spearmen, to guard him from the conspirators. Wealth gives almost unlimited power in the great city ; and the temptation is very strong, to feel that it ought to have equal influence in the Church of Christ. But just turn to the Epistle of James, and you will see this demand rebuked with terrible severity. This mingling of mammon with the leaven of the Gospel, places our Church in a situation like that of the Samaritans, when they went up from their homes,

and took the place of the ten tribes of Israel, who had been carried away captive. They professed to worship God, and yet kept their idols, and the wild beasts devoured them while doing it. If the churches of the living God look round to see whom to elect for officers, and look, first, to see who is entitled to office, because he is rich, and wealth is almost the sole recommendation, they may be assured, they dishonor their God, and, like Judas, betray their Master for money. No : — claim what you will, — notice, — distinctions, and the like, in the world, because you are wealthy. That is the place to make the claim, and have it allowed ; — but do not come into the Church, — bought not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of the Son of God, — and ask her to lift you up higher, because you have more wealth than others. And remember, too, that if a Church lifts you up to-day, because you are rich, and this be her motive, she will drop you to-morrow, when you are poor, though your moral character may remain untarnished. Remember, also, that it may not be so great a sacrifice for a rich man to give of his abundance,

as it is for the poor man, in the same church, to pay the rent of his humble pew.

And may I not here suggest the inquiry, whether the method of building churches in large cities, is not too often a source of great temptation? I feel almost necessitated to say, I have no particular Church in my eye, while I draw the picture. For many years a man toils, strives, runs, and eagerly crowds his way towards wealth. The first, great object is to get money; and he obtains it. And now, a more difficult thing, in the great city, is to make that wealth yield him distinction and notice. If he be a worldly man, he rears a splendid house, furnishes it elegantly, makes rich, expensive, and frequent entertainments, keeps his carriage, &c. But if he be a professedly religious man, he feels that these are not exactly the paths for him to tread. The avenues to notice, all seem to be crowded. All cannot be city-council men, nor aldermen. What shall be done? Some three or four, who are in the same situation, — perhaps belonging to as many different churches, — can come together and conclude that the Lord calls them to rear a new church. But, to

make it worth their while, it must be large, splendid, and very costly. They are just the men to do it. Accordingly, they can appoint themselves a "building committee," select the piece of ground, and go forward to build. They can advance a little money, as it is indispensably necessary, during its erection, and agree that the mechanics shall be paid some months after the building is completed. They are now ready to look out for an *available* minister; that is, a preacher whose name and popularity will go farthest in selling the pews of the church. On selling, they find that since the house is an expensive one, the pews must be very expensive also. But they sell enough, at once, to pay half of the expense of erecting the building, and the price of the ground. They must now mortgage the building, for some twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars, to pay the mechanics. The "building committee," of course, become the mortgagers, and obtain the money, and thus, they at once are life-directors and controllers of the concern. They have the building, and the Church, and the pastor, all under their control; and thus they are the great men, "the lead-

ing men," in that congregation. This is placing themselves, each, on a high stool for life. Who does not know that almost all our Churches, in great cities, are splendid, and very expensive, and that too many are burdened with a debt, which is like a millstone around the neck? You may place Paul in such a Church, as its pastor, and these men must be very remarkable men, not to cause him to feel that he is hampered and loaded. If it be said that these churches are built with motives wholly free from ambition, and free from a desire to make great men in the concern, I reply, that I am sorry that simple piety should so often mistake, and suppose that a great, magnificent church, deeply in debt, is the best instrument with which to honor God, and bring souls to Jesus Christ. At any rate, the temptation here is so evident, and so strong, that I should be inexcusable for not pointing it out, and warning against it. I see no objection to having a beautiful church, on two conditions ; first, that it be paid for, and free from debt ; and secondly, that so much be *given* towards it, that the pews may be put so low, that poor men shall not be excluded, and it

thus be a place of worship for them, as well as for the rich.

I do not pretend, or suppose, that I have enumerated all the temptations which are peculiar to Christians, in great cities; but only such as are prominent and marked. In doing this, I have tried to show the picture of a reality, without exaggeration, and without concealment. If any think I intend by it to apologize or excuse Christians for their sins, I trust they will be disabused of this opinion by the next Lecture. If any think I have drawn the outlines of the picture with too heavy a pen, I think that an appeal to the most candid and intelligent Christians in the community, will correct this mistake. I do not wish to discourage, nor to accuse, or criminate, but to state real dangers, trials, and temptations, as I see them coming upon Christians every day. Nor do I wish to show the barrenness of the land, and the powerlessness of the Gospel; — on the contrary, if piety can, and does live, and often live with great power, amid all these temptations, it shows the great vitality of the Gospel.

If any one thinks it an easy matter to be a

Christian, and to live the life of a consistent Christian, in a great city, let him try it one year, and his charity will be greatly augmented. If any one thinks it an easy matter to go through all these temptations, and reach heaven in safety, he shows that he is ignorant of himself, or of the requirements of the Gospel, or of both. The snares are on every side, and blessed is he who can endure temptations.

But it *can* be done. We know that God would never place his people in a situation in which they cannot, if faithful to him, stand. But in order to do this,—in order to be a living Christian,—feeling yourself to be such,—known and acknowledged as such by men, and at last acknowledged as such before the universe, you must have moral principle that is deep, fixed, unwavering. The question of expediency must not take the place of the question of conscience. There must be deep moral principle, founded on the belief of an omniscient God, and the retributions of the eternal world. When you awake in the morning,—when you go out in the throng,—when you lie down at night, you must feel

that God sees you, and that all you do will appear at the Judgment-day. The Bible must be the standard of right and wrong, and when you ask the question, is this or that lawful and right, ask yourself if Christ would do it, were he in your circumstances. If you think he would not, you may not. Above all, while you are admonished to have forbearance and charity towards others, be very watchful and jealous over yourself, and call earnestly upon God to give you the influences of his Spirit, — remembering, that “as many as are the sons of God, they are by the Spirit of God;” — that many are called, and but few chosen; and that strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it. While from the golden walls of the city of God above, a great cloud of witnesses bend over us, and seem to say, “come up hither,” they also point to their crowns, and then to the Bible, and say, we are they that keep the sayings of that book! And while we tremble over the feeble one exposed to all these temptations, they see written upon the forehead of the weakest disciple, “God is able to make him stand.” “Watch ye, stand

fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.
Faithful is he that hath called you : heaven
and earth shall pass away, but his words shall
not pass away."

LECTURE III.

DUTIES PECULIAR TO CHRISTIANS IN GREAT CITIES.

“To do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” — HEB. xiii. 16.

PERHAPS, among those who have seemed to bear only the human form, without any other desirable attributes, it would be difficult to find a more marked case than Nero, the emperor of Rome. And yet, when Paul was a prisoner at Rome, under this tyrant, and while expecting that perhaps every day might be his last, he writes a letter to the Philippian Christians,—one of the warmest and most affectionate of all his letters,—and in that, tells his friends that all the saints salute them, but chiefly they of Cæsar’s household; *i. e.* the Christians in the family and palace of Nero, the heathen emperor, who was persecuting the Christians,—were foremost in their zeal and love, when they had an opportunity to become

acquainted with Christians in a distant city. Who would not feel it to be a difficult thing to be a decided, and warm, and devoted Christian, in such a situation? And yet they seemed the most affectionate of all the saints at Rome. Why should they, whose lives might be forfeited at any moment, seek out the prisoner Paul, make his acquaintance, and join, first and foremost, in salutations to distant churches? Is there any answer to the question, except that when placed in trying circumstances, Christians *may* shine with peculiar lustre, if faithful to God?

By what was it that such a man as Noah, living amid a world of infidels and scorners, engaged in work at once the contempt and derision of an unholy generation, could condemn a world, and become heir of righteousness, which is by faith, unless it was, that when placed in trying circumstances, the good man may become brighter and holier?

How often does the Bible refer us to Abraham, — pointing out a man who seemed to live thousands of years before his time, — and telling us of all the circumstances in which he was placed, — wandering in tents, — without

a home, — called to sacrifice his own son, — and plainly showing us, that it was all these trials that made him what he was! And that young man who was torn from his father's house, and sold into slavery, — cast into prison, — neglected, forgotten, and yet who became the savior of Egypt, was not his piety of the most noble and exalted kind, and was it not owing, humanly speaking, to the circumstances in which he was placed, that he became such a character?

The fact, then, that we may be placed in circumstances difficult and trying, amid temptations that are great, need not discourage. By the mercy of God, they may be the greatest of all blessings to us.

In a former Lecture, I have endeavored to point out some of the temptations which are peculiar to Christians who live in large cities. These were allowed to be very great, and very dangerous. I shall now attempt to show *what are the duties which are peculiar to Christians who live in a large city.*

I. *Christians, in the large city, should constantly bear in mind that they are continually surrounded by great temptations.*

Some may prefer to remain in ignorance of their dangers, because responsibility and duty come with knowledge. But is this wise, or safe ?

A father sends a son to a distant city on business. When the young man reaches it, he finds the plague is there. It is all around him, and daily, in every street, death is doing his work. What is safe for this young man ? to remain in ignorance of his danger, or to know it all, and, by care, abstinence, and medicine, do all in his power to preserve his life and health ?

A valuable ship, freighted with a rich cargo, is just passing through a winding channel, amid rocks and shoals, islands and reefs. Would you have her captain sleep in his berth, or would you have him, though accompanied with painful anxieties, on the watch, eyeing and shunning these dangers ?

In all such cases, the answer is plain enough. The want of vigilance, and care, is not merely folly, but it is sin. And is it any the less sin to remain in ignorance, when the dangers which surround the soul are constant and unceasing ? — When they crowd upon you from day to day, all the way through life ?

The temptations through which you pass to-day, are very likely to return to-morrow. The five which you meet to-day, may be ten to-morrow. And most of the temptations which beset you are of the most fascinating kind, and resemble those serpents which are said to have the power of fascinating, by first putting on the most gorgeous colors, by which the eye may be caught, and then by poisoning the very atmosphere by their breath. Even before sin had corrupted the heart, we are told that it was the beauty of the fruit that caught the eye of Eve, and increased the power of the temptation; as if all the art and cunning of Satan had been, unavailing to effect his object, had not the fruit been so fair.

Let it be kept in mind, that it is impossible to have such great collections of human beings brought together, as you find in the large city, among whom wealth is rolling, all of whom are trying to catch a part, — who number all kinds and descriptions of men among them, without having great temptations surround them; — that we voluntarily place ourselves in these circumstances, — some of us because we want wealth, some because we want luxu-

ries and fashions, and some because we want excitement. This is all voluntary on our part, and if we thus throw ourselves into dangers, it is our duty to provide against them, and to meet temptation. If God has made it the duty of a man to live in a large city, he will shield him and protect him, if faithful to his God. But even the Son of God must not tempt his Father, by throwing himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and then claiming the promise that he would give his angels charge over him. The mercy of God may follow a man who throws himself in the way of danger, and may pluck him out; but no man has a right to rely upon this. Peter may follow Christ, and meet temptations, and fall, and the eye of Christ may follow him and recover him; but let not Judas, who seeks temptation, and falls, think that he shall ever recover. The providence of God will probably ever make a distinction between a man who goes into temptation because imperious duty leads him there, and a man who needlessly goes there.

A single glance will show you what advantage the great Tempter has in swaying the

destinies of the human soul, when he comes into the crowded population, where he can dazzle through the eye; charm and captivate through the ear; entice through one another; drive his victims by ridicule; draw them by fashion; and where all agencies combine to produce one mighty result,—a result which it is his great aim to produce universally in this world, and that is, to shut God out of the human mind.

You know that a camp is, of all places, one of the most corrupting. It is so, not because war is in all cases so wicked and inhuman a business, but it is because every thing there is well adapted to shut God out of the mind; and when that is once accomplished, men are swift in their progress in sin.

Keep it ever in the mind, O! write it upon the memory, that no man can come into the great city,—no man can live there and run the race for property, for fashion, for distinctions of any kind, such as are to be found only in the city, without great hazard to his soul; that the young Christian who comes here in hopes that his temporal prospects may be benefited, will meet, and must meet with many

fiery darts of the adversary, which it will be very difficult to quench. And what shall we do, say you, — and how shall we be safe?

Ah! it would be comparatively easy to answer this question, could I first make you sensible of the fact, that the temptations of the crowded city are great in number, and powerful to resist. Oh! could you see the spots where Christians have fallen, all marked with blood, you would be almost afraid to walk the streets. And I say it, not by way of discouragement, but by way of warning, that it is hard to be a consistent, uniform, devoted Christian, in a large city, just as it is difficult to walk steadily and upright upon the deck of a ship under full head-way, and in a stormy sea. While every thing that meets the eye tends to render the moral feelings torpid, and to put the conscience, — the first and last sentinel of the soul, to sleep, while the lust of the eye and the pride of life have full sway, why should we not feel that there is no safety but in knowing our danger, and in seeking help where alone it can be found? Here, the heart, like those eternal fires in the temple of Jupiter, which were never allowed to go

out, must keep an uncompromising watch over all its movements.

Keep in mind that they who go through many tribulations and temptations to the kingdom of God, will have rewards proportionate. The post of honor and of reward, must be the post of danger. If the early Christians could read their Bibles by the fires of persecution,—if their prayers could go up in company with martyr-spirits,—if they were placed in circumstances of great temptation, and yet conquered, and held fast the crown with a grasp so firm that no man could take it, may we not feel assured that we, if faithful to our God and to ourselves, shall receive not merely strength according to our day, but, at last, a reward bright and glorious? But, temptations great and manifold, we shall and must meet.

II. *Christians, in great cities, should feel that they are peculiarly bound to act from principle, and not from impulse, fashion, or popularity.*

It is not so difficult to find a man who professes to act from principle, as to find one who has a correct standard of action. For exam-

ple, the man who would murder his best friend in a duel, professes to act from principle ; but it is a principle of honor, as it is called, and all actions based upon it will be abhorred by his God. And the man who watches the opinions of those around him, and tries to do as they do, thinks he acts from principle ; but it is a principle of popularity, or fashion, and is as likely, to say the least, to be wrong, as to be right. That man only has a correct standard of action and of life, who makes the revealed will of God his standard.

In all places and circumstances, all other standards will vary, and especially is this the case in the large city. Here new things are constantly coming up, and what is in vogue and popular to-day, may be the very reverse to-morrow. — What comes in on the flood-tide to-day, may be left on the sand when the tide comes to ebb, and nobody will think it worth picking up. It is painfully amusing to notice how things, men, and measures, which are popular beyond description to-day, and of which it seems as if we could never tire, will, in a few days, have passed away and be forgotten. The reason is, that which decides a

thing to be good or bad, desirable, or otherwise, is public opinion ; and that is as variable as the wind. Men, and communities of men, are governed, moved, and guided by it, and even the Christian is in great danger of allowing himself to be guided by it too. It sometimes requires strong principle to move onward, when public opinion holds back ; and oftener, a principle equally strong, to stand firm, when that opinion says move onward, and act. It is much easier, and vastly more popular, to cling to a thing, or to throw it away, as the multitude do, than to have great principles of action based upon the word of God, from which you will not vary. To do this, or that, because public sentiment says so, and make this a rule of action, will save much reflection, much thought, and much prayer for direction. But this is not that standard which God has revealed, and which never varies.

“ Every body says so, and every body thinks so, and every body does so,” is not the standard of the Bible ; and it is a very poor one for the Christian. How often do Christians repeat and quote the opinions of men who

make no pretensions to having the Bible their standard, — as if this was right, and as if beings, on their way to the throne of God to be judged, might cast away his light, and walk in the opinions of a world in rebellion against him ! How rare to find a man who can claim for himself opinions, in morals, that are settled ; a judgment, as to duty, which is made up carefully, and a conscience that is enlightened ! Christians too often call their popularity by the more specious name of influence, and feel that to lose their popularity is the same thing as to lose their influence ; that the one is the exact measure of the other, and thus they lose sight of the Word of God, the only standard that is safe.

How much easier, too, to act from impulse, and to go forward in a certain course, as long as the impulse sets us that way, and then to go backward, if a counteracting impulse sets us the other way, than to do right, and go right, at all times, without waiting for impulses, and without being driven out of our proper orbit by them !

Principle is a child of light, and born of heaven ; while Impulse, though he claims to

be a brother, is a creature wholly of earth. How unlike, in features, in conduct, and in character! Principle has a steady, placid, unmoved countenance, holding in his hand a scroll, inscribed Duty, which he very frequently consults. Impulse has a countenance lighted up with smiles, and kindled with expectation, or else fallen, dejected, and looking this and that way, to see how he can leap over difficulties, or run away from them. Principle is remarkable for going straight forward, where Duty directs, whether others will go, or whether he must go alone. Impulse watches to see where the multitude will go, and then leaps forward to take the lead. He will go through thorns and briars, if he can go through with a single dash; and leap over torrents, if he can do it at a single bound. Principle will do it, if he has to take the briars out of the way, one by one, and if he has to toil a long time in building a bridge over the torrent. There is no relationship between the two, and when Impulse claims that he is brother to Principle, he utters a foul slander.

Without fixed and settled principles, founded on the Word of God, we shall never be

certain that we are not making great and fatal mistakes, as to what amusements are lawful, — what expenses are proper, in our circumstances, — what shall be the tenor of our intercourse with our fellow-men, and what shall be the education of our families. The judgment and heart must be continually brought under the word of God, and to do that, you must observe three things: —

1. Be familiar with the Bible. /

The Book of God is so full of biography,—it places men in such a variety of situations, and all under the strong light of Inspiration, that it is almost, if not literally impossible, to find a situation in which a man can be placed, where all his relations to God and to man are to be drawn out, for which a parallel may not be found in the Word of God. Questions of duty will be very few indeed, in which you will hesitate as to what you ought to do, if you have determined to make the Bible the standard, and if you are familiar with that; but if you consult expediency, in the common and proper use of the term, you will be as likely to go wrong as to go right. Probably many make mistakes, and go astray, from an inexcus-

able ignorance of what God has taught, in his Word.

2. Habituate yourself to read sound and thorough works in practical theology, and by this means strengthen the mind and heart, and the purposes of the soul, in what is correct and right.

To be a consistent, decided, and balanced Christian, in a great city, you must be habitually, and calmly, and dispassionately decided; but nothing can make a man decidedly good, but the bringing his mind, and feelings, very frequently, into contact with the great principles of right and wrong; such as have been carefully drawn out by the labor of great and good men.

3. Make every decision of moral conduct, the subject of individual and fervent prayer. God has promised to keep the feet of his children, but only on the condition, that they walk according to his precepts. A man who neglects habitual prayer, can no more claim that he shall walk safely, than the man who walks in darkness, and yet refuses to take a lamp, can claim that he shall make no false step. The Word of God is the lamp that shineth in

a dark place, and we see by it only step by step; but he who takes every step by prayer, will have light enough. A conscience intuitively knowing what is right, and what is wrong, is what God gives only in answer to prayer.

III. *It is peculiarly the duty of Christians, in large cities, to set their faces against extravagances.*

There is no indulgence, or wrong propensity of the soul, which will not increase in its demand, in proportion as we yield to it. And it is almost incredible how soon, how very soon, when placed in circumstances in which we can indulge in what is really extravagant, we become so habituated to the indulgence, that we imagine what is actually luxury and extravagance to be only the necessities of life.

You have doubtless noticed, and perhaps, been surprised at the fact, that in our country, almost every man is over-estimated, in regard to his property. The solution of this seems to be, that almost every man yields to the temptation to approach nearer what is extravagant, than his circumstances will allow. He must keep up with his neighbors, and perhaps hopes

to gain credit for property by his profuse expenditures. What a few years since was considered as respectable, as to style, is now thought to be otherwise ; and what was then considered as within the reach of the rich only, is now suitable, and proper, and indispensable for all. We are hardly sensible how continually we are surrounded by things tempting, elegant, splendid, beautiful, and showy ; and hence, when we commence life, we begin as high up the scale as we can go, and then every new purchase must be a little better, of a little finer quality, and a little more genteel than the last. This might do, if when we start in life we begin very low and very humble ; but the difficulty is, we must start in life on a scale higher than that at which the last generation stopped. Hence the young Christian, commencing thus, must spend every moment of his time, every energy of his soul and body, to earn enough to keep up the style of the day, and to rise as fast as the tide rises. He is a slave, toiling for a shadow. These habits creep in upon us imperceptibly, but surely, and continually. Almost all worldly people do so, of course ; we must expect it ;

but surely the disciples of Him who had not where to lay his head, ought to have higher and holier aims, and a principle that can withstand this temptation to fashion and extravagance. For the last few years we have had hard times, and great distress, and the clouds have been constantly gathering thicker and thicker. We have watched the progress of things with an anxious eye, and we are satisfied, that the vast amount of extravagant expenditure is the horse-leech which continually cries, Give, give, and which never says, enough ; that this is a crying sin, and one upon which heaven frowns. And the people, professedly devoted to God, have much to answer for in this respect. Why should we try to run in a race which we can never win, and reach heaven? If the children of this world will spend their money for that which is not meat, they must do so ; but even they will have many fearful falls ; but the Christian should set his face as a flint against it.

But do not such and such families, who profess to be Christian, do so and so ? Yes, — but do they show that the Gospel of Christ, and the glory of God, is the ruling passion of their

lives? If not, are they safe models for us? But my neighbor does thus and thus! Very likely; and your neighbor may be better able than you are, or he may be doing what he ought not to do, and what he cannot do long. But, say you, can you draw the limits, and go into all the particulars, and say whether this and that is wrong? No; nor have I any wish to do it. But am I not safe in saying, that so long as Christians are so extravagant that they are not known from the world,—so long as, in consequence of extravagance, they fail in business as often as the world, in proportion to their numbers, there *must* be something wrong in their slavery to fashion. And here I hope I shall be pardoned by those whom I wish particularly to address, if I say a word to Christian females; and I hope they will brace up, and bear it, while I tell them my fears that they have much for which to answer to God.

It is impossible for any one to know the worth and value of money, unless he has earned it by honest, every-day hard labor. In large cities, it is not to be supposed that those females who are peculiarly exposed to

the sin in question, can know the worth of money, by earning it themselves. Here, then, at the outset, is a strong temptation to spend money, and one of which they are not apt to be conscious.

If there be, also, in the heart of the female, a natural love of dress, — and of this I do not pretend to be a judge, — but *if* there be such a feeling there, this also increases the temptation.

In large cities, too, very many females have so much time at their disposal, that they can keep an eye, and a heart too, on the many new and beautiful things which are brought here, and displayed with a skill truly professional. They can spend much time in the examination of this and that article, in comparing and deliberating about the purchase of a single dress. All this creates a taste for the thing, and it becomes a matter of rivalry who shall exhibit the most taste in selecting, or the most patience and skill in finding, what is beautiful of its kind.

Suffer me also kindly to say, that when a Christian female besieges her father, or her husband, for this or that beautiful thing, which

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he is unwilling to purchase ; — when she pleads that such and such ladies have it, and she really longs to have it also,—that Christian female may be sure she is wrong. She is not merely trying to be extravagant, but she is wounding the feelings of her father, or husband, and that, too, severely, and is tempting him to do what his conscience tells him he ought not to do. There are very few men who do not desire to see a lady handsomely dressed ; and there are very few fathers, or husbands, who do not love to see their daughters and wives adorned by what is beautiful, and who will not go to the utmost extent of their means to procure such articles for them ; and when they are pressed and urged by those they love, to go beyond this, there is injustice, and, I may say, cruelty in it. And, we have no doubt that many a man has had his heart wrung by the increasing tendency to extravagance in his wife or daughters, who profess to be Christians ; and we have quite as little doubt that the wounds were unconsciously given.

Now, then, I come to the spot, of all others in this world, where we may safely make an

appeal. We appeal to the Christian females before us, and ask, if they will not feel responsibility, on their part, and feel, too, that the Apostle means *them*, when he says, “whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.” May I not ask them to aid in staying the progress of extravagance, which sweeps through the land? If in the darkest year that our great commercial cities have ever known, we imported twenty-three millions worth of silks and satins, at the invoice price, is it possible that we can long be a Christian, honest nation, and sustain it? And have Christian females no voice in this question? I am sure there is enough of conscience, and goodness, and generosity, and nobleness, in the hearts of Christian females, in our cities, — where fashions must be created, — to respond to such an appeal, however unskillfully made. The decision must be theirs; — for our sex have no power to say nay, if they choose even to increase in extravagance.

IV. *Christians, in great cities, are peculiarly bound to become attached to the cause of Christ.*

This proposition may, at first, seem to be a strange one ; and you will be tempted to ask, is it not the duty of Christians, everywhere, to be attached to the cause of Christ ? Certainly it is ; but you may be in more danger of neglecting the duty, in some situations, than in others.

The soul, without any doubt, was formed for strong attachments. We love those who are bound to us by the ties of relationship ; and the last ties which the hand of death shall sever, are those which bind us to the beings whom we love. But this is not all. In most situations we become attached to inanimate objects. The man who spent his childhood in the country, loves his native hills, — he loves the fields which lie in sight of his father's door. Every tree and shrub is connected with some pleasant recollection of childhood. Was he born at the foot of the lofty mountain ? The first thing upon which he fixed his eye, in the morning, was its top, gilded by the rising sun, and upon that, too, his eye rested the last

thing in the evening, as its head faded away in darkness. Was he born on the spot where the land and the ocean meet? To him, there is no music like the hoarse voice of the Ocean; and in that ceaseless, eternal motion of its face, he sees a charm which can never be forgotten. What man ever forgot the steep hill which he climbed in childhood, — the rock in the sea, where he planted his foot, as he began to fish, — the brook over which he used to leap, in his buoyancy, or the tree, under whose shade he used to read? He returns to childhood's home, after many long years. The hair on his head has turned grey, — the generation who were born with him have passed away, — the dwellings have altered, — but he can recollect the countenance of each rock, — can commune with the aged tree that sheltered his boyhood, — and go back to the morning of life, as he treads the little foot-path that winds through the village grave-yard.

Now in a great city, there are no such attachments. You live in a street, or in a particular house, for years, and you leave it without regret, and without sorrow. You go into another without reluctance, and without

emotion. In a little time you pass and re-pass your former dwelling, and hardly recollect that you ever lived there. In going from one street to another, you feel very little loss, and very little gain. You change your place of business, and perhaps the business itself, and do it without attachment or regrets. Your acquaintances come and go, — are here to-day, and off to-morrow, and you have hardly time, or opportunity, to form deep attachments. The unceasing hurry, and perpetual pressure for time, prevent our forming those deep attachments which we do in country life. Our attachments, so to speak, are to things in general, — to the general excitement which surrounds us. The waves roll too rapidly to allow us to love any one very strongly. And the danger is, that these same feelings and associations be applied to the cause of Christ; — that the habits of mind and of situation lead us to place the cause of God just where we do every thing else; and that we feel an attachment to that, no stronger than we do to other things. It is very difficult, obviously, to have one set of feelings, and of habits, and of associations, in respect to every-day life,

and a set of feelings, of habits, and of associations, entirely different, in respect to the things of Jesus Christ. Perhaps this will, in part at least, account for the fact that our religious associations do not take deeper hold of the soul, and do not make more a part of our very existence.

Now we reach the point at which I am aiming, and I say that though you are so situated in providence, that you form no very strong attachment to your dwelling, to your street, to your business, to the family-pew in the church, to the changing mass of human beings around you, yet it ought to be a matter of deep interest, of study, and of great effort, to have one set of attachments that are strong, permanent, and which make a part of your very existence;—and these should be your attachments to the cause of Jesus Christ.

You will ask *how* you can thus become attached to the cause of Christ, and exercise towards that, a set of feelings so entirely different from what you do towards other things?

My reply may surprise you by its simplicity; but God has ordained that all principles of

useful application, shall be simple. My reply is, be in the habit of doing something for the cause of Christ every day, and you will soon find that you love that cause above all other things.

What makes you love the flower that stands in your parlour, meekly curling its graceful form towards the window to drink in the beams of light? Not because it is helpless, or beautiful. The china vase may be all that; but because you every day do something for it. You give it water, — you remove it, when it requires more heat or more air, — you watch its budding, — you study its nature and its wants.

What makes the stranger, who takes the helpless infant to her home, so soon attached to it? Because she is every hour doing something for it, — and God has made it impossible for us not to love any thing which we aid, — an unanswerable argument for the benevolence of Him who formed the human heart!

When, at the close of the great contest, the army of Washington was disbanded, the officers met their commander to take their leave of him. They came up to him and shook

hands in silence, and in tears. What made the parting so affecting? Because they were so much attached to each other? And what created that attachment? The answer is, that for years they had been striving and aiming at one object, — the freedom of their country. They had toiled together, rejoiced, and sorrowed together. They had every day been doing something for that object; and it is utterly impossible for the human heart to take up any object, and feel for it, and do for it continually, without loving it.

This constant doing, would make the Christian, in the large city, love the cause of Jesus Christ more than all other causes. Let him daily see how much of light he can derive from God's Word, and he will love his Bible more. — Let him daily see how much of prayer and praise he can bring into his closet and he will love that the more. — Let him every day be able to say that he has made some *sacrifice* for Christ, and he will love him the more. One great difficulty with us is, that we do not make enough of real, actual sacrifices for God, to affect the principle of which we are speaking. Had Washington and his

officers only shared the triumphs of victory together, they could never have been so firmly united in love. The sacrifices which they made together for years, created that mutual and strong attachment. Let the Christian be in the daily habit of making sacrifices, in order to be punctual in his closet,—to be daily growing in a knowledge of his Bible,—to be prompt and faithful in attending the meetings for prayer, keeping his heart warm and solemn,—to give of his property to build up the cause of Christ cheerfully,—let him aim to do something that shall be a self-denial, every day, in order to aid the cause of Christ, and he *will* love that cause; and, while mingling in the tide of men that is passing away, and where every thing is changing, he will have his heart and hopes bound to the throne of God, and his soul will have an anchor that is sure and steadfast. Perhaps the very fact that his attachments to other things are loose, may render these the stronger.

V. It is peculiarly the duty of Christians, in great cities, to feel a high responsibility.

By the talents which Christ puts into the hands of his servants, we understand all the

opportunities which we have of doing good to ourselves, or to others; and if, at the great day, our responsibilities are to be commensurate with our opportunities, in these respects, they will be great indeed.

You wish for the opportunity to get good to your own soul, — to enjoy the Sabbath, — and the best instructions which the pulpit can afford! Here is the Sabbath, — and here, among these churches, you will find as good instruction as the earth can yield.

You wish for the opportunity to train up your children for heaven. Here you have the opportunity. You can here bring them to the altar of God in Baptism, — you can here daily show them the difference between the Christian, and one who is not, — in your conversation, — in your equipage, — in your associates, — in your manner of keeping the Sabbath, — in your plans of life, — in your manner of spending your money, and in all that they see in you which goes to make up character. Perhaps in no situation can the Christian family have a better opportunity to show that they are the sons of God, because they are led by the Spirit of God. And when

you go down to the grave, whether you do or do not leave a portrait on which they will gaze, you can leave the impression that will last many years, that here, amid temptations frequent and strong, you stood firm, and lived and acted, in all that made up your character, as if conscious that the eye of God was continually upon you, as you were passing onward to eternity.

You wish for opportunity to do good to others, — and no field need be wider. Very likely, under your very roof, you have those who were neglected in their childhood, who may not be able to read the Word of God, — who do not care to be present at family worship, — who do not love to go to the house of God, or who have no place to go to, — who hardly know, and who do not realize that they have immortal, perishing souls, — heathen under your very roof. Begin *there*, and feel that you are placed at the head of a family by God, — that you may feel responsible for it, and to which you may do good ; and God will never respect a piety that blazes abroad, while it overlooks what is perishing under your own roof.

You are a merchant, or a mechanic. You have clerks, or apprentices, committed to you; and a heavy trust is involved. I am aware that many feel that they have done their duty to these young men, if they teach them the business for the learning of which they were committed to them, and if they see that the young men are at their posts in business-hours, and are faithful to their employers. But this is a very inadequate conception of the duties involved in the relation. Let it never be forgotten, that a Christian cannot have intercourse with his fellow-men, and leave out the relations of eternity. These are committed to *you* in the place of parents, and can parents be excused for neglecting their sons at all times, except merely in the hours of business? Perhaps their parents are in the grave; and suppose you were there also, and should leave a son to be a clerk, or an apprentice to another, — in your instructions on your dying-bed, would you merely say that you wished his employer to oversee the boy during the hours of business? Would this protect his habits, his morals, his character? Where do these young men spend their evenings? Where

their Sabbaths? Let the bell strike the alarm of fire, and watch at the small taverns which line our streets, and you will have an answer. How often do they attend family worship? What is their progress towards heaven? — or their prospect of ever getting there? Alas! if we should tell of the exposure of these young men, who are under the care of professed Christians, — dangers which we *know*, — it would make this assembly shudder; and we know but a small part of them.

Now the responsibility of the Christian, over these youth, is in exact proportion to their danger. You take them into your employment to aid you to become rich; do not forget that their immortal souls are hazarded in doing it! How much easier to give the fragments which are left from your table to the beggar at your door, or to give your cast-off garments to the clamorous mendicant, and call this charity, and doing your duty, than to feel responsible for the spiritual and everlasting welfare of those who, in the providence of God, are especially committed to your care? Who are your family? When God established his covenant with Abraham, he commanded

him to include his servants in his family, and to command them as well as his own children ; but to call only your own blood-relations your family, while you have others under your care growing up as heathen, is almost as much out of the way, as for the Jews to call only those neighbors, who lived the next door.

You would do good ! Need I say that in these lanes and alleys there are thousands of beings who feel that they are oppressed by the rich, who need advice, counsel, reproof, instruction, and aid ? That *there* are the children growing up in squalid vice, — in depraved ignorance, — who need to be searched out, — brought again to the Sabbath-school, and taught the character of God.

Nor is this enough. I am perfectly satisfied that the little teaching, and the little influence of the Sabbath-school, can never do the work of saving our great cities. What makes a lake stagnant, — sending out death all around it ? The answer is, there is no circulation of its waters. Only create a circulation of the waters, and it ceases to send out disease and death. Just so in great cities. There is a broad belt drawn around each, where there is

vice, and ignorance, and crime; and darkness almost Egyptian. The waters are stagnant. There is a broad distinction between them and the enlightened, and the rich, and there is very little sympathy between them. And why? Because the rich man hopes never to see his son go down there; and the poor, ignorant man, despairs of ever seeing his son rise. Now what we want, is something that will put these waters in motion, and thus purify them, and that something is education; and never can you hope to raise, and enlighten, and save our great cities, till you have got the mind of all this darkened mass in motion, and in a state of being educated. You want to take it out of the influence of ignorance and depravity; you want to form new, and permanent habits; you want to create mind, and call out thought, and show the poor man that his child can rise to any station for which he is prepared. You want to call children from the cellar, and the shop, and educate them, and show that enlightened virtue will be rewarded. To do this, the day-school, — the attractive day-school must be employed, and watched over. And this must be done

by Christian men, — by men who live for God, or it never will be done at all. And you can see here, I think, that there is as real connexion between the brick and mortar of a primary school-house, and the salvation of a great city, as between the Bible and the conversion of the soul to God. And before the millennium shall come, this work of enlightening the mass, in our great cities, must, and will be done, and be done by Christians; and most sincerely should I rejoice to see the day, when every local church will have, not only her own devoted pastor to feed and guide her, but also, at least one missionary of the cross, and one day-school, in full and unceasing operation. Let an hundred churches, in any great city, do this, and a half century would not go past, ere these great marts, instead of being death-spots on our country's freedom, or gangrenes on the body politic, would be great fountains of light, and example, and noble doing.

And to whom hath God committed this great work? I reply, to Christians. They have the means, the power, and the knowledge of what is wanted, and they hear the call for

charity, and prayer, and effort, and benevolence, that is enlarged, noble, God-like. This position is theirs, — and it is a very responsible one.

There is no one so poor, that he cannot find some who are poorer ; there is no form of doing good, which you may not select, as you prefer ! And what creates the responsibility ? If you were born here, this then is the field in which God placed you, and on which he would have you labor for him. If you have come into the city because you are active, and can hope here to acquire property, remember that you have placed yourself voluntarily in this station, and that you cannot escape responsibility. Where is light more needed, — where is salt more needed, than where the tendency to decay, is, in every thing, so strong ?

The Christian, then, in the great city, has need not only of a strong guard over his own life, and of a vigilance that is sleepless, but he needs to be very careful that he sees the path of duty in the Bible-light, — that he measures every thing by the Bible-standard, — that he has a conscience enlightened, quickened, and tender, and that he feels, that if there be one

spot on which the call to come out of the world, and live for God, is louder than on another, that spot is here; — he needs to be reminded often, that he is here placed amid temptations that are unceasing; — that the powers of the air, and the powers of the earth, here combine to ruin the soul. He may here fight under the banner of the cross, where foes are the thickest, where there are few to cheer him onward, where it is hard to make an impression, for good, that is perceptible or abiding; but he will not strive alone, nor labor alone. The approving eye of God will rest upon him.

We do not over-estimate the danger, when we say that to walk amid these enticements and fashions, which are all around us, and not be carried away by them, requires a strength of purpose, and a moral courage, and a close reliance upon God, that are not common. We do not over-estimate the difficulties, when we say that there are very few spots on earth, from which it would not be easier to obtain the crown of life, than the great city.

I shall close this lecture with two brief hints;

1. So long as there is no distinction between

the family of him who professes to live and train up his family for God, and the family of the most worldly man, there is something very wrong. The commands to "come out of the world," — "be not conformed to this world," — "lèt your light shine before men," — "present your bodies a living sacrifice to God," mean something very solemn, and something different from merely making a profession of religion. They must mean something different from living to yourself, to your family, or to nobody. If, then, you feel that you are indifferent in your appearance, in your conscience, as to how you acquire, or spend money,—how you keep the Sabbath, how you train up your family, from the rest of the world, in these respects, you may be certain that your course is wrong, and dangerous. High and responsible is the station of the Christian here, surrounded by tens of thousands of immortal, and yet perishing beings, dropping into eternity daily, and to whom he may do good to an extent, limited only by the providence of God.

You must here tread, now on spikes, and now on burning coals, and you need have care that your feet are cased in shoes that will

protect them. You are exposed to the very hottest fire of the enemy, and you need a courage that is cool, and a fortitude that shrinks from no danger. Your ship must pass round Cape Horn, and she needs to have her spars and rigging all in order, and her cargo so stowed, that she may bear any weather, and any commotion of the elements, which she may encounter. You have to tread your way hence, to the skies, through ten thousand dangers;—Oh! do not think them few, or your responsibility small.

2. The Christian, in the great city, must be very watchful.

He who gave us the command to watch and pray, well knew the dangers through which we must pass, and that we should need often to return to meet him in the closet, — to rekindle our lamps, — to gird up our loins anew, and to obtain new strength from him. The little fish that attempts to escape from the dolphin by flying, must often wet his wings; and the Christian must often go to his closet to escape the enemies which surround him. He may here meet with what will excite and move him, — he may associate

with minds that are keen, awake, and susceptible, but which do not acknowledge the power of God in their souls. Is he letting his light shine? — Is he carrying the conviction to their minds that eternal things are real? To study the Bible now and then, will not do here; you must be embalmed with the spirit of the Bible. To inquire now and then at the door of your heart, will not do here; to go to your closet now and then, when you feel like it, or when the providence of God drives you to it, is not enough here; — you must be at home in the closet, and have the Holy Spirit to guide you every day. “Be ye filled with the Spirit,” is a direct command.

Above all, labor, and pray to the Spirit of God, that you and your church may enjoy frequent and powerful revivals of religion. When the tide runs so rapidly, — when the world is all harnessed to run the race of vanity, — when Mammon can call out his armies by a single note of his trumpet, — when Fashion can bend all down, and make them pass under her yoke, — when these tens of thousands are calling for excitements, and will have excitements, what can stay the desola-

tions which are going on, but frequent revivals of religion? What else can stamp eternal things on a mass of creatures, all sinful from their birth, and in a situation in which every sinful propensity is called out? Oh! if there ever was need of Pentecostal days,—of the sound as of a mighty rushing wind,—of tongues of fire, and the baptismal power of the Holy Ghost, it is at this day, and on such places as we occupy. These are the dangerous places,—the places to which the Prophets and Apostles delivered their messages, and wrote their letters, upon which judgments and vials of wrath have been poured, and upon which the Almighty energy of God's Spirit has been felt. Here we are, amid these dangers, and trials, and duties, with the Word of God to cheer us; with the everlasting arm to sustain us, and with the blessed Spirit to aid us. In his strength let us confide; in his mercy rejoice; for his presence, let us pray earnestly, faithfully, unceasingly.

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LECTURE IV.

DANGERS PECULIAR TO WORLDLY MEN, ENGAGED IN BUSINESS IN GREAT CITIES.

“Beware lest any man spoil you, — after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” — COL. ii. 8.

ONE sinner, says God, destroyeth much good; and such is the close connexion between men on earth,—such the influence which one exerts over another, that a man with a bad heart is sure to do mischief on a large scale.— We are in danger of being spoiled, led away from duty, tempted to depart from God’s commands, by the influence of others. By “the rudiments of the world,” the Apostle doubtless means those maxims, customs, fashions, and opinions of men, which are at variance with the commands of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. — The warning forms an appropriate text for my discourse, which will be confined to *the dangers which surround the*

spiritual interests of the worldly man, who is engaged in business in the large city.

By using the term "worldly man," I hope not to be understood to imply any thing in the least reproachful, or disrespectful. I use it as a convenient term to designate a large class of men, who make no professions to be religious men, or to be guided by motives other than those drawn from this world. They may have honor and honesty, humanity and kindness, and all the social virtues, — they may be noble-minded, and generous, and yet, after all, not be actuated by motives beyond those of this world. A man may have all that they can claim, without having ever opened the Bible. I speak of him as a candidate for immortality, who, as yet, has not taken that fully into account. I speak of him as a probationer for eternity, surrounded by great, and continued dangers; and it is these that I wish to point out to him.

If I were to attempt to express, in a single line, what I conceive to be his danger, I should say, that *his situation peculiarly exposes him to forget the interests of his immortal soul.*

How this is so, will be shown, as I hope, in

what follows, so clearly, that none can gainsay it, and so kindly, that none can feel hurt by the picture which may be drawn.

I. Success in business, in the great city, requires close attention, severe application, and engrossing watchfulness, — and this tends to shut eternal things from the mind, and to endanger the soul.

Those who suppose that any thing great, or valuable, can be honestly and honorably obtained without great efforts, know very little of the race of life, which men are running. You can find deep scholars, and men of great learning; but you must have an inadequate conception of what learning costs, if you suppose that any amount of genius can make such men, without long, and most severe application.

When you hear a speaker utter what cost him little labor, you may be charmed by his manner, and by his voice, and feel that you have spent an hour most pleasantly, but when you come to spread those thoughts upon the printed page, they are too much diluted to be permanent. You must enjoy all the flavor of the essence while it is escaping from the bottle,

— for it has all evaporated when once poured out. But that which is permanent, and at all times agreeable, must be the result of long and deep thought. So it is in all professions.

I will not say that there may not be here and there a weak man, or one who, on most subjects, is an ignorant man, who may, in a great city, make a fortune ; but I believe such cases are very rare. If a man succeeds in business in the city, he must give his time, and thoughts, and life to it, with an intensity that knows no relaxation ; with an earnestness that knows no diversion, and a concentration of thought that is in danger of excluding every thing else. Go into the counting-room of any man who is called a good business-man, and I greatly mistake if you see much there that is not made for use, constant, continual, and hard use. Every thing, from the dray at the door, to the strongly-banded ledger, shows that somebody has hard work to do. The trappings and elegancies of life, are not there. You see a beautiful ship slip her moorings, and glide gently out towards the ocean. She is setting out on a voyage round the world ; she is to stop at some dozen ports, and exchange

her cargo half as many times ; but can she do all this without much toil, anxiety, and watching ? No ; nor does she make this long voyage successfully, unless *somebody* gives much close thought to the subject, and is able, by a comprehensive knowledge of events, actual and casual, to give minute directions, and accurate specifications, as to what is to be done here and there.

The very object for which a man throws himself into this race, is to become successful in business, and in acquiring property, and he cannot compete with those around him without giving his thoughts closely to it. I have heard surprise expressed, at times, that the man of business, in the great city, is not more intelligent on other subjects, and that one who is so indifferent, and apparently so ignorant, on other subjects, can be so successful in his particular calling. But let me say that there are two good reasons for this, and reasons that must be permanent ; viz., first, that the man of business must be so engrossed with it, that he has no *time* to seek knowledge in other paths ; and secondly, that his mind is so intent on his business, that every thing else

is excluded from his thoughts. And this is done by design. So that when he reads, or hears, out of his line of business, whatever it may be, he lets it pass quickly out of the memory. The mind concentrates all its energies on a single point, so that, like the focus of a burning-glass, it burns up every thing that comes under the concentration of its rays. And minds that seem listless, or dull, or uninformed on other subjects, are great, and quick as the race-horse, and powerful as steam, in their own departments. Business becomes, to such a man, not merely a profession, that requires toil, and thought, and effort, but a profession that corrodes, and consumes every thing else. There is no time, and no thought for any thing else.

And I will here add, that an acquaintance with men of business has given me a very high idea of the strength of intellect, of the disciplined and concentrated mind, essential to their success. They must unite thoroughness and accuracy with despatch, — minute calculations with great plans, — pliancy that can yield to every impulse, with an energy that can surmount any obstacles, and overcome any diffi-

culties. Find the man whose life has been spent in wielding the broad-sword, and you will find that his right arm has accumulated almost all the strength of the whole system, and appropriated it to itself. And the mighty river may move so silently, in its deep channel, that you can have no conception of the quantity of water it discharges, till you attempt to wade through it yourself, or to cope with its power by damming it up.

Now this very absorbing of the soul, — this very concentration of strength and energy, that banishes every thing else, and that makes you forget every thing else, is the danger which I allude to, when I say, that the attention necessary to success in business, in the great city, is dangerous to the soul. I mention it as a danger, *not* as an excuse for neglecting your God and your soul. Perhaps such a man now and then comes to the house of God on the evening of a week-day, to hear a sermon. But his thoughts and feelings have been all day long pouring into the deep channel of his business, and they will not, at his command, be arrested, so that the heart and judgment may be prepared to receive impres-

sions of divine things. He comes into the house of God on the Sabbath; but the soul has had its anxieties, its feelings, its strength, all given to his business during the six days that are past, and if now he can banish his counting-room, and his ships, and his goods, still the mind is so jaded, that it reluctates, when you ask it to take hold of new subjects, with a power sufficient to make them appear real and eternal. All the week the boat has been propelled with an arm so vigorous, and so skilful, that it will not, at the call, stop and hang upon the waters, while you hand the bread of life to the rower.

Thus some professions ruin the soul because they are so connected with temptations, and sin, that it is morally impossible that a man should follow them, and be a good man, living in the fear of God. Others are ruinous, because they thrive by constantly taking property from the community, without giving an equivalent; and others, again, are dangerous, very dangerous, not because you do what is, in itself, wrong, but because, to succeed, you feel that you must give your time, your thoughts, your heart, and your strength; and

thus you shut God and eternal things, out of your mind and soul ; and this is precisely the situation of the man of business in the great city.

But perhaps you will say, this very devotedness of heart and mind, is necessary, in order to success in business here, and any diversion of the attention will endanger success, and *therefore*, if a man have his attention so diverted and engrossed that he become a religious man, he will be less likely to succeed in business. I reply, that does not follow ; for if it did, God could not assure us that godliness is profitable for the life that now is, as well as for the life to come. It does not follow, also, for three very plain reasons ; viz.

1. If you become really a religious man, your weary spirit will be periodically bathed, cooled, and refreshed, by turning off your thoughts, and having them come in contact with the Bible, with the Sabbath, and with God's Spirit.

2. The community will have confidence in a conscientious, holy man, and will do much to aid, to sustain, and to encourage him.

3. The blessing of God will more surely attend him ; and his blessing can make rich.

So that I do not feel that it is true, that because a man becomes a religious man, he is in danger of being less successful in business. I have no doubt that, if you will make the calculation, you will find the reverse to be true; and the more extended the observations, the better.

II. *The object for which the worldly man comes to the great city, and for which he stays here, is to acquire property, — and this tends to lead him to shut God away from his thoughts.*

It will not be new for you to hear that very few men come into the great city for ease, or quiet, — to get rid of care and anxiety. All these are increased, by coming here, a thousand-fold. What is repose here, if there be such a thing, is activity elsewhere; and what is common activity here, is the driving of Jehu, in other places. The toil,—the bending down of the mind,—the energy which will accomplish much, in the country, will not begin to effect any thing here. No man, therefore, who understands what he is doing, comes to the great city for ease, or for the sake of getting rid of care. The object is like that ex-

pressed by James; "I will go into such a city, and buy, and sell, and get gain." There can be no doubt but the *great* thing that brings a city's population together, and that binds them together, is the hope of acquiring property.

Suppose, now, a man were to go into some distant part of the world, for the *express* purpose of making money; and if he found that spot very unfavourable to meditation, to prayer, to finding eternal life, what would he say? Would he not be apt to say, I cannot here attend to religion; it is a poor place for that; but I will give my whole time, and attention, and soul, and mind, to the business which brought me here, and, as soon as possible, I will return to my home, where I shall have time, and opportunity, and every thing favorable to my finding eternal life. I will therefore give it no thought at present. And is not the man of the world, in the great city, tempted to do this very thing? Is he not in danger of feeling that the great, the absorbing object, for which he is here, is to acquire property; and till this end is gained, he has no time, no heart, to give to his soul? In all that he does, he wishes to keep that plan upper-

most, — to be sure that every sun that shines, and every breeze that blows, has something to do in promoting that great plan, — that *one* plan.

A company, from different points of the compass, meet at a fashionable watering-place. They there find fashion, multitude, splendor, amusements, good eating and drinking ; but do they go there for the express purpose of obtaining, or acting out religion ? Would any man go to such a place for the purpose, or with the expectation of obtaining religion ? You say, No. They go there for the purpose of finding health, or of relaxation from all care. And the population of a great city no more come together for the express purpose of finding eternal life. In both cases, religion may be called accidental, in their calculations. At the watering-place, you may hear a solemn sermon, or the Spirit of God may arrest your attention, and make you holy. And in the great city, the same blessed influence may turn off your eyes from vanity, or your heart from mammon ; but this is not any part of the plan of the congregated population.

Watch a nation, as she goes into war ; and

as she holds herself in that position for years. Does she, during all this time, improve in the arts, in the sciences, in agriculture, or in any of those things which advance the greatness and the prosperity of the nation? Does she, during that time, become more moral, or more religious? We know that the very reverse of this is true. And the reason is, not that mind and thought are less active, during these wars, than in times of peace, but because all the thought, the mind, the attention of the nation, is absorbed, and given to the war, and to the downfall of their enemies. This is the great plan which fills the soul. Probably during the last quarter of a century, in which Christian nations have so generally been at peace among themselves, they have advanced faster, in what is for the convenience, the comfort, and the good of the family of man, than they would in centuries of war; and probably, too, during this period, more has been done for the religious welfare of the human family, than during all the period from the Reformation to that time. Any great plan, — any great, absorbing object, which lies before the soul continually, tends to drive out every thing else.

And therefore, is the man of the world, who sets out with the plan of acquiring property, in danger of letting that plan shut away the thoughts of the salvation of his soul, and the commands of his God.

III. *The sympathies of all around him tend to carry his feelings in the channels of earth, — and these endanger the soul of the worldly man, in the great city.*

Wisely are we so constituted, that, through our sympathies, the feelings, the conduct, the pursuits and aims of others affect us powerfully. No man can go into a congregation, where, by some overpowering circumstance, all are brought to tears, without being himself moved. Who could go into the city, where they are all terror-smitten by the plague, and are flying in all directions to avoid the arrows of the destroyer, and not partake of the common feeling, and be afraid also? Whether a community go right or wrong, if a powerful, absorbing feeling pervades it, we all partake in it. Now in the great city, this tide all sets against the salvation of the soul. In the country village, if the Spirit of God visit you, all are moved with you, and the feeling of

sympathy becomes a powerful means by which men are led to God. You go to the house of God, or to the meeting for prayer, and you find God is there, and one feeling, and one impression, pervades every heart. You walk the streets, and all seems hallowed, and every countenance you meet, bears the marks of solemnity, and all aids to deepen your feelings. For a time, at least, all bow to the influence, and every heart feels it, and by a powerful sympathy all help one another to find eternal life. Not so in the crowded population of the great city. You may perhaps receive some impression to-day, and the thoughts that crowd upon your soul may be solemn and tender; and to-morrow you walk the streets, and see thousands of faces, and on them all, you see not a look or a feeling that refers to eternal things. They are all eager, and awake, but it is on other subjects. You fall at once into the strong tide of sympathy, but it sets you away from God, and from eternal things.

You speak with perhaps fifty men, during the day, and five hundred, during the week, and among them all, you hear not a word about the interests of the soul. And you will

say, we must not only *be* men of business, but we must talk and think about business, about commerce, and politics, the light and the grave news of the day, to *show* that we are men of business. All this may be true, and I mention it because it is true, and because the great impression which this great crowd of immortal beings makes upon each other, is adverse to their finding eternal life. Oh! if you lived in a world where every thing, from the fresh daily-paper that you find in the morning on your table, to the late partings at evening, tended to remind you of God, and to call forth your sympathies towards him, it would be very different. But the living mass around you, so alive, and so awake to every thing relating to this world,—so eager for something new,—so delighted with any thing that can excite,—so anxious to live in the swollen tide of human sympathies, seek to turn all this tide in a channel that leads from God. The desires of the human heart are like a flame of fire, burning day and night. And the more fuel you apply, in the shape of excitement and sympathy, the faster does it consume the life and the soul, and fit the immortal being for

relishing nothing which hath not vanity and vexation of spirit written upon it. The influence of men, in the great city, upon each other, is constant and momentous; and I need not say, that this must create a vast flood of sympathies, and that these set you towards time, and not towards eternity.

IV. *Dangers attend the man of the world, in his business, before and after the question of his success is settled.*

Suppose a young man commences life in the country, without property. He has health, but a young family depending upon him for support. Let that man be ever so frugal, ever so industrious, and ever so careful, there will be a point, between poverty and thrift, which it will be hard to pass over. He will probably be years in passing; but when once passed, he will do well, and is safe. Is it not essentially so with that same man if he comes to the great city? He may, indeed, have the question whether he can, or can not succeed, decided sooner, and more certainly. But there is a moment when the ship will meet the heaviest wave which the storm raises, and, as she begins slowly to climb it, the straining of

her joints and timbers almost leave you in doubt whether she can surmount the very last rise of the wave, before she sits on its summit, and looks down into the abyss below. And any man, who has been toiling up a lofty and steep mountain, will tell you, that the last few hundred feet are, by far, the most difficult to surmount.

Well, is there any thing wrong in this? No; but there may be 'great dangers, both before and after you reach the point of success. There is danger before you reach it, lest you give your soul no time for rest, — lest you drive your car over the Sabbath, — over your Bible, and shut God wholly out of your mind. Is it not so, that a man, in the full tide of business, — while straining every nerve to reach the point of certain success, and entire safety, so chases the world all the week, — so courts it, in all possible ways, that when the Sabbath arrives, he is so exhausted that he has no energy of body, no energy of soul, no elasticity of spirit, to meet the duties of that holy day? Is it not so, that he can hardly rise, on the Sabbath morning, in season to find the house of God; and when he does go there,

does he not too often come, much like an exhausted machine, with no power to gird up his mind to sober thought, to deep reflection, to manly discussion, or to close and thorough reasoning? Is not this the reason why men, who are keen in business, come to the house of God on the Sabbath, and demand that preaching which will play prettily upon the surface of the soul, and which will charm the ear, without going to the soul itself, and calling up its strength and its power to comprehend, to believe, and to yield to great principles? What a listless day is the Sabbath, to very many in the great city! On all the way, till he reaches and has passed the point of entire success, is the man of the world in danger of feeling that if he can save enough of strength to drag a listless mind, and a fatigued body, to the church of God *once* on the Sabbath, he is doing pretty well!

But suppose he has passed the point alluded to, and is sure to succeed in business, and to become an independent man. The dangers to his soul may now be increased ten-fold. There may now be some relaxation to that keen, intense, anxious pursuit of business; but

his very relaxations become dangerous, inasmuch as they tend to animalism.

How often do we see a man, as soon as it is decided that he will be successful in business, commence a course of stimulating his system, till it becomes over-burdened, and is destroyed by its own fulness! What creates that riot in the blood, which cuts off such men at a stroke, and with a suddenness that would be painfully surprising, were it not so common? All this animalism, which leads the man to yield to good eating and good drinking continually, is certain to drive God from the heart, while it destroys the powers of the body; and experience will testify, that, as a general thing, such men are the very last that are brought into the kingdom of God. Oh! if men knew the dangers which attend the man who is sure of becoming rich, they would feel that it is a fearful position in which to be placed. I call that a fearful position, in which the man, who has been so blessed by the God of providence, the God of the winds and of the waves, that he becomes thrifty, or even wealthy, carries a heart which is no more grateful to his God. I call that position fearful, which so benumbs the

conscience, that the man who would not be seen to ride out on the Sabbath, will, nevertheless, make that the day on which to eat his best dinner, drink his best wines, take his sweetest sleep, or perhaps see those friends who are peculiarly gifted in knowing the merits of a good dinner! I call that position fearful, when a man professes to be, and means to be moral, and upright, and honorable, all the week, — who denies himself, that he may give his whole soul to business, and yet feels that he may spend God's day in recruiting his strength for the race, in indulging his appetites, or in brutalizing his heart by indulgence.

It were easy to speak with great severity here; for if there is a point at which heaven seems to be braved and dared most shamefully, it is where we take the mercies of God, and make them the means of pampering the body, and rendering the heart gross, and the ears heavy. But I do not wish to use severity. I know my own heart too well, not to fear, that, were I in such a position, I should do no better; but I do say, that this is a dangerous place for the man of the world, and one at which he should cry unto God most earnestly

to be carried safely over in the strength of the Lord.

Then there is that loftiness and pride of feeling, which is almost inseparable from success in business, and which makes us look down upon those beneath us, with feelings allied to scorn, and upon ourselves as great and wise, or we could not have succeeded! How few who are successful in business, are willing to ascribe it all to God's good providence, which favored them! Success, in any profession, is so dangerous, that you can hardly find a man, even in the pulpit, to whom God gives great success, without also giving the sharp thorn. But there is, probably, something peculiarly hardening to the soul, and to the conscience, in acquiring property, — I might almost say, in looking at, and handling money. Hence you will find rich men who will deny themselves no gratification, and yet, if they have a poor widow, or an orphan for a tenant, are unmerciful to them; men who have every comfort, and every luxury which wealth can procure, and yet have no heart or hand to give glory to God by dedicating any part of that wealth to his cause. Why would you

dread, of all things in the world, to be in the hands of what is called a purse-proud man? Because his heart is frozen, his sensibilities are dried up, and his soul is hardened, by handling the dross of earth.

Every approach to this state of heart, makes the things of time, and sense, the most important, and shuts away eternal things, and makes them unreal. It is like steeping the soul in those waters which seem soft and delicious, but which are sure to petrify every thing over which they flow. A few years of contact will turn the most delicate flower, or the most tender animal, into a cold stone. Ah! when you feel that you have become successful in business, or are about to become so, — when you feel your heart elated in consequence, — when you find yourself beginning to sensualize the soul, by indulging the appetites, in consequence of the increase of wealth; — when you find your heart hardening towards others, who have less of what you have, — when you find that you are looked up to, and courted, as a successful man of business, let me, as your best friend, say, that your soul is in a position most hazardous, and that if any man ever needed the grace of God, you do.

By the very nature of things, there must be an everlasting separation between Christ and Mammon; so that he who has the one, can hardly expect to have the other.

Will the fact be denied, or even questioned, that those congregations, in the great city, where the Gospel has the most visible power, — where the number of souls converted to God in a given year is the greatest, are usually those, where the poor and the lowly in this world assemble; and that, in proportion as you find a congregation rich, and fashionable, and showy, in that same proportion there seems to be but little of the power of religion in it. The Gospel may be as faithfully preached in the one case, as in the other; but there is unspeakable danger, lest, when we are prospered in this world, the heart be so lifted up, that we neglect the salvation of the soul.

V. The man of the world, in the great city, is in fearful danger of having his soul ruined by the money-spirit of this age.

In the providence of God, this world has, so far, been permitted to move by impulses. Sometimes for generations, and even centuries, a kind of intellectual and moral sleep will

hang over the earth, and no advancement will be made in any thing for the benefit of the human family; and then again, the waters will be agitated, as by a whirlwind coming out of the empty north,—and in that excitement, light and knowledge, arts and sciences, and even religion, will make rapid advancement.

That excitement in England, which, in the time of Cromwell, resulted, first, in civil wars, in overturning laws and usages, in a long struggle between freedom of thought and conscience, and real despotism, finally ended in the decided advancement of civil and religious liberty.

But amid these troubled waters, what men arose, and what strength of heart and intellect they poured out, as they walked amid these stormy times!—mighty men, such as John Howe, Richard Baxter, and John Milton, towered high amid their generation!

What we usually denominate the *Crusades*, was one of those unaccountable excitements among men, which poured a tide of living men from Europe to the East, to effect a task, difficult, and childish, and useless when

achieved. Millions laid their bones to bleach on the sands of Syria ; but the result was, that the arts, the sciences, the literature, and the civilization of the East were brought back into half-barbarous Europe, — a result, under Providence, wonderful, for the speedy diffusion of light and knowledge into the different parts of Europe, — but a result which never entered even into the dreams of those engaged in it. The light of civilization was about to be extinguished in all the East ; and this was the wonderful provision which God made, to have it rekindled in the West.

This same weary, restless state of the human mind, also resulted in the Reformation, — a result wholly unlooked for by the actors, and one wholly under the mysterious directions of Divine Providence.

That was also such an excited age, which resulted in the discovery of this continent. The world was so madly set upon making discoveries, that nothing short of finding a new continent would satisfy men.

These periods of excitement have aroused the mind, and called out the strength of successive generations, and they have, for the

most part, resulted in the good of our race; not that *men* designed they should be so, but because *God* overruled them for this end.

But the heart sickens as we look back, and see that many of these excitements have resulted in the horrible work of wars, and human bloodshed. This was the readiest and only known outlet, — the only discovered method of draining off the excited feelings of communities of men.

But the trade of killing one another is now so well reduced to an art, and the death of so many who play the game is so certain, that men are now pausing to look before they strike. The area of two miles square, on the plains of Waterloo, on which lay fifty thousand men and horses, dead and dying, was a sight not to be forgotten at once; and those who saw it, have since had little desire to go out in new battles.

Now that great and awful excitement in Europe, which produced those terrible wars, of which this battle was a single scene, did not stop with the men who were then slain; it did not stop when the great agitator breathed out his soul on the solitary rock in the ocean.

No, the excitement went on, though wars ceased. Nor has it stopped even to this hour, if indeed it has begun to slacken.

Some pronounce ours a superficial age, — and if by that they mean, that it produces but few very deep scholars, — but few men who throw out the emanations of intellect as a giant would throw out his strength in the day of his excitement, it is not a deep-thinking age; but if by it they mean that on *no* subjects do men think deeply, I apprehend they are mistaken.

The most profound thinking of this age is not committed to paper. On some subjects there is deep thinking. The fact is, the thought and the action of this age, the whole accumulation and aggregate, have been directed to one single point.

There is a master-spirit who rules this age, and bends it to his own purposes; and on him do all the inventions and arts of our day most assiduously wait. In a word, that excitement which at first involved all Europe in wars, — which made the field of Waterloo so well known, — which dethroned Bonaparte, — instead of acting through such masses of men as great and marshalled armies, has since spread

itself, and is now acting through the world in individuals. This all-pervading, all-living, and all-acting spirit which characterizes *this* age, is *the universal and unconquerable desire for money*; and to this end every thing is made subservient.

There is no desire to make discoveries abroad for the glory of it, — to rescue ancient tombs from the hands of infidels, — to write books so full of immortal fire that time cannot quench it, — to wage wars for barren honors, and victories without spoil. This age is now spending its strength in seeking money. And when we speak of the facilities of the age as creating this spirit, we may mistake the effect for the cause; for it is this overpowering money-spirit of the age which has called up these inventions. Steam showed its strength at its call. The rail-road was invented, and the iron, fire-fed horse placed on it, that this spirit might travel faster than the wind. The credit-system, as it is called, was invented to wait on this spirit; and those great chains and pulleys, whose snapping behind the curtains has startled nations, and made them tremble as if their idols had been touched, are all the invention of the money-spirit of this age.

But lest you should think I am speaking of a feeling which you are conscious that you do not possess, I must say here, that there is *one* peculiarity to this spirit in our times. Usually, when men have sought for money with a passion, it has been that they might hoard it and gloat over it in the ecstasy of secret worship. *Now*, men seek wealth in order to spend it, — *to spend it in making a show in the world.* This has created a race which has been run by all classes; as if the great question was not how much moral worth a man has, — not how much intellectual wealth, — not how much money he honestly owns, — but, — *how much can he spend!*

The little word “*STYLE*,” is a magic word, and like a small key, it opens the door into a wonderfully great apartment. What a change has that little word made in our manners, — from the banishing of the old oaken table and the six-inch looking-glass, for the splendors of a modern private saloon! What speculations has it set in motion, which have raged on land and on water, from the city-lot, the great landed domain in the west, to the food of the humble silk-worm! What frauds has it caused

to be committed, known, and unknown, which are continually coming to light, — frauds upon government, upon public property, upon the life-interests of friendship, upon the very bread of the widow and the orphan, — upon the poor disappointed ones, who have been cheated out of their all! Oh! these all cry out together, but they all cannot describe the dimensions and the strength of that awful desire for the use of money, which is the master-spirit of our age. Wherever you turn, you will see proofs of the universal presence of this spirit. You have heard it in the murmurs of the street,— you have seen it written on the golden splendors of those who have not fallen, — you have seen it upon the tarnished glories of the fallen and falling, — in the blasted hopes of thousands, and you will read it on the anxious brow of your acquaintance. You have heard the proof of it sighed from the massy prison, — it is read in the glance of the fugitive from justice, — it is footed-up in startling numbers at the bottom of the daily expense-book.

Now what have been the inevitable consequences of this race in the fashions of earth? One very plain one is, *that every body must*

be in debt. It is the order of the age that all shall make as much show as possible; and money is desired only for this end. Of course, every man will calculate to live up, fully up to his income. Then others, and many too, will go beyond their income, — beyond what they can earn. The next result is, that those who are honest, cannot get all their honest income, — because, all by which a dishonest man exceeds his income, must come out of the honest. Suppose that your income, and that of all your acquaintance be a thousand dollars, and you graduate your expenses to that amount, even to a cent; the result would be, that all would be running in debt. Because, each one must lose his share of the property which those use, who exceed their honest income. And, as very few calculate to live *under* their supposed income, and as many will live *over* theirs, the consequence must be that every body runs in debt. This must be the result to all, who do not live as much within their income, as will make up for what others exceed theirs.

The next plain evil is, *that you are perplexed, and cannot get out of debt.* This is

evident on the very face of the proposition. If I am an honest man, and feel that the spirit of the age and the fashions of the day compel me to live up to my income, and if, because others over-spend theirs, I cannot get what is honestly mine, but must meet with losses here and there, and I therefore fall behind and run in debt, the same causes continuing, will inevitably keep me from getting out of debt: and the difficulty is, the more honest a man is, the more difficult does he find it to keep clear of debt, or to obtain relief when once involved.

Now the very spirit of the age tempts the man of business to graduate his expenses, not by what he has in his hand, but by what he *ought* to have. A man in business this year makes sales, the profits of which are some five thousand dollars. He sells to some fifty different people, and at the end of the year, he is to receive his profits. Now what is the temptation? Is it not, to consider the five thousand dollars as already his own, to graduate his expenses accordingly, and to forget that *he has virtually been insuring the honesty, and the success of the fifty men to whom he has made sales?* And when, at length, he

finds that he is disappointed, — that instead of obtaining his profits, he has lost fully to that amount, — what does he do, or rather, what is he tempted to do? To contract and curtail expenses, or is he now *tempted* to become reckless, and to plunge headlong into almost any speculation which promises relief? Hence, we have an evil arising from the spirit of the age, worse than any and all yet mentioned; and that is, *men are tempted to use dishonest means and reckless measures*, to obtain money to keep up in the race which all around them are running.

The proper and only safe state of the heart is to wait upon God's providence, and in whatsoever state we are, to be content, — that we may take what he sends without murmuring.

But the moment a man does a dishonest act, even to pay an honest debt, he puts himself without the providence of God, and like Saul, because heaven does not answer him, he determines that he will find an answer at the door of hell. Once place yourself on a course of dishonest means, even to gain money to turn to honest ends, and you need not be surprised at any measures or means, any wrongs,

or frauds, or injustice which you may be left to commit, because you have placed yourself without the reach of God's promise to bless you, and you are left to go as you will.

Hence the speculations that have been so abundant upon every thing that can be speculated upon, from the earth that is solid, the whale that is afloat, the elections which are pending, and even the conjectures as to what will be in future. Hence, in the mania, some speculate that they may continue to ride in splendor, — some that they may aspire to live in a costlier style, — some that they may lay up “a little something,” as they call it, for their children, and some, very pious people, speculate for the Lord! But the greater number, probably, to pay honest debts, contracted by trying to keep up a certain style in living!

We need not here enlarge upon the evils of this short, and almost fierce way to money, — the appetite it creates and enlarges, — the suspension of old-fashioned, honest industry, — the feverish state of mind that is looking to see sand turned into gold, and bubbles harden into diamonds, — for, there are evils, the chil-

dren of this parent, so hideous, that we forget the parent; — and these are, the knavery, the swindling, and the awful, wholesale frauds to which this evil leads men; and while we all know there are honest merchants, and honest bankers, honest brokers, honest lawyers, and honest buyers and sellers of almost every thing, we find but few honest knaves or honest swindlers; and if men are not one, or both, it is not because they are not tempted to become so by the spirit of the age!

Were a man to enter into a special contract with Satan, the author of evil, to serve him for rewards, as his servant, could he ask God to protect and bless him? Does it not come to the same thing, when a community are ready to cast off the Providence of God, and use dishonest means, which are the Devil's tools, to obtain money? How can the soul give itself to the service of God, or even the thoughts to Him, when all the soul is wanted to run the race here? Could a man commune with God in the closet that is haunted? — haunted by fears about investments at the east or the west, — about city lots, — about stocks that continually fluctuate, if not created on purpose to

fluctuate? How can a man pray that God would not suffer him to be led into temptation, when he knows he is going from his knees to rush into it?—and who has so long lived in it, that to be out of it, would be to be out of his element! What mockery is that, when we pray God to make us contented with such things as we have,—when this is the very last thing we desire, and when we are determined to run with the swiftest and wrestle with the strongest! Can the man who habitually tasks every power of his soul to gain money, in order to spend it in keeping up with the world, do any thing for the salvation of that soul? Who can rightly pray for a family, when he sets before them the example only of the worldly man, and can hardly spare them time sufficient to caress them? How does this spirit so poison the air, that the voice of prayer will not go up even from the closet, except as the echo from the sepulchre of the soul! How does it chase from the fireside, the joys of home and home-scenes, and make the family-circle, where the sweetest virtues ought to flourish, a strange place, and a barren, desolate garden! To all these dangers, and these tempt-

ations is the man of the world exposed, in his business in the great city. There, beyond all other places, does he feel that to fall behind in show, or in expenditure, would be to ruin his prospects of ultimate success, and he *must* do as he does.

VI. *The man of the world, in the great city, is tempted to undervalue truth.*

We are not insensible to what is called the nice sense of honor in the man of business; but perhaps this too often means only that he is punctual to meet his payments, and not to allow his paper to be dishonored; and to this, the highest selfishness would prompt him.

We are not initiated into the mysteries of trade; we can say nothing, from personal knowledge, of the double invoice, — the one to purchase by, and the other to sell by; we can speak nothing, from our own experience, of the ways and means of eluding or diminishing the demands of the custom-house; but, at all events, we may safely say that the conscience of the buyer and of the seller must often receive shocks, terrible for their suddenness and severity.

The salesman — what a task has he, — if

he will not use falsehood! How is he tempted to profess that these goods are of the very first quality; — that they cost him so much, — when neither is true; — to say that he *has* held them higher than he now does, but he wishes to confer a personal favor on his customer, and therefore he offers them so low! Who does not know that such professions are made, till nobody pretends to believe them, though all are disgusted?

How, then, are they falsehoods, if nobody is deceived by them? I reply that a lie is such, not as it is received, but as it is *intended* to be received. Otherwise, it would be almost impossible for some people to lie, if they could not do it till they were believed.

So the buyer pretends that he is quite indifferent whether he purchases or not; and the seller is quite indifferent whether he sells or not; and so these two indifferent men will contrive to meet every few hours, and throw out baits to each other, and yet both professing not to desire the trade! The purchaser decries the goods; — he has seen better, has had cheaper offered him, — can do better elsewhere; and yet, when he cannot cheapen

them any further, to oblige the seller, he takes them! "It is naught, it is naught," saith the buyer, "and straightway goeth away and boasteth." It is not for us to say how much news is manufactured for particular purposes, — how many letters are conveniently forgotten to be delivered, till too late to take advantage of the news, — how many letters are received which were never written; but it is for us to say that the man in business, in the great city, is awfully tempted to exaggerate good qualities, — to point them out where they do not exist, — to conceal defects, and to gloss over imperfections, without recollecting that the eye of God is upon him. If he says it is difficult to get along without doing so, I reply, that this very difficulty constitutes his danger, — that it will be more difficult to bear the indignation of God for ever; that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;" and that no apology will be accepted by Him. The gains of time, even if they were each a world, would not, in God's view, compensate for the sacrifice of truth in a single instance.

But there is one more danger to which I would allude, — one more rock, on which

many split. I mean, there will be times when there will be reverses of fortune,—when every thing seems to work counter to your plans,—when the tide that sets so strong against you, can be stemmed no longer. I hardly know of a sight more worthy of admiration, than that of a man in business, straining every nerve, undergoing every self-denial, breasting every discouragement, that he may honestly meet his engagements, and disappoint no man. Men there are who make all these efforts, and after all, they fall. They fail in business. And here are two severe temptations. The one is to feel so mortified that they die of a broken heart,—they sink down to the grave, withered by the blow, and feeling that there are none to pity them. The name of a broken-down merchant, is too often applied to one who is sinking to the earth under the mortification.

The other danger is, perhaps, still more fearful; and that is, that the man who fails in business, having no support from religion, takes to the bottle, and at once sinks towards the grave of a drunkard. Can you not think over the circle of your acquaintance, and find

many such victims? None can probably describe the sickening of heart which comes over the honest, upright man, who has failed in business. But let him not take it too much to heart. If he has been honest, time and industry will retrieve his losses; and at the moment that he falls, a multitude stand ready to pity him, and to sympathize with him. Let him not sink at heart. And if any of my hearers should ever, in the providence of God, be placed in this situation, let me beg of them to bear up like men. Don't sink down in discouragement, — don't try to drown sorrow with brandy, — don't think that you are despised or hated. If you have been honest, and a man of integrity, the community will look upon you as they would upon a ship that has long and nobly borne up against the storm, and when she yielded, yielded to inevitable necessity. Above all, recollect that when riches make to themselves wings, and fly away, — when the tide of prosperity sets backward, — when the fond hopes of the heart are dashed, — when we feel that we must carry our family with us, down to the shades of humble life, — when we feel that the labor

of years is all lost, and a dark cloud hangs over all the future, let us recollect, that above, and beyond all these, are the riches of eternity, — the inheritance of God's people, — the home of blessedness. Other arms may fail us, other hearts may change, — for,

“The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone;” —

and other ears may be cold to our sorrows, but he who makes God his trust, has one for his helper, whose heart never changes, whose arm never grows weary, and whose fountain of mercy is never exhausted. Oh! how do those of you, who have to run this race, to meet all these temptations, and to endure all these dangers, need the everlasting God to support you by his strength, to guide you by his eye, to wean the heart from the world by his Spirit, to feed you on his manna, — and if you are bitten by the fiery serpents, to hold up before you the cross for your healing! And, Oh! if in what I have said I have seemed to be severe upon the man of the world engaged in business in the great city, it is not because

I would treat him with any thing but respect, and kindness, and love, and, often, yield him my admiration ; but, because I feel that he is surrounded by great dangers, and peculiar temptations, and I would do what little I can to point these out, and lead him to feel that if *his* soul is saved, it must be because he works out his salvation with fear and trembling.

LECTURE V.

DANGERS PECULIAR TO YOUNG MEN IN GREAT CITIES.

“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way.”—
PROV. xiv. 8.

THERE is only one thing in the wide universe which is really valuable, and that is; — *character*. By this I mean a confidence, in the bosoms of those who know you, that you have the power, the capacity, and the disposition to confer happiness on others. This, of course, will include a power over yourself, so that you can govern and restrain your own wishes, and thus take care of yourself; and it will imply that you have the power, and have the disposition to exercise that power, to do good to others. It is this that makes the character of the Divine Being so perfect, so exalted, and so worthy of homage and of admiration. A good heart, benevolent feelings, and a balanced

mind, lie at the foundation of character. Other things may be deemed fortuitous; they may come and go; but character is that which lives, and abides, and is admired long after its possessor has left the earth, — the theatre on which it was displayed. Allow me, then, to begin this Lecture by dropping a few very brief hints in regard to character.

I. Character is all that a man needs for success in this life.

As the light of this century has advanced, it is found more and more difficult to make men believe that mind and matter are of equal value. The world has learned that birth is of little consequence, — that titles are of little worth, — that riches are valueless, in comparison with a balanced character. Some of the most wonderful minds in other countries, and in our own, have been found in the vale of life. But the fact that such a mind as that of our own Bowditch, was at first discovered in a cooper's shop, was no barrier to his rising to become the admiration of the learned world. And who would not rather have the name and character of John Milton, the blind school-master, than the wealth of empires, or the

brightest crown that ever encircled the head of royalty? No matter what is your birth, or station, or condition, character cannot be hid, and if you possess it, you will find that it is appreciated, and it will meet with success. It matters not what is your profession or calling; if you have character as your capital, you will need no other. You may be sure of success. Character will command money, aid, men, any thing which it needs, in order to accomplish its aims.

II. The foundations of character must be laid in early life.

If you wish to rear up a man to endure great bodily fatigue, you would begin to train him very early. If you wish to raise up a character of great perseverance, you must begin very early in life. I do not mean that a young man should develop the full, mature character of age; but I mean that the foundations of that character must be laid while young. The habits of body, of mind, and of the heart, must then be formed. At a very early age, you see the foundations laid of such characters as those of Jacob and Joseph. The latter was a mere stripling, when thrown upon the

providence of God ; — and away from home, amid the temptations of sin, or the horrors of a forgotten prison, his character was formed. If you look for other examples, you will find Moses, from his very infancy, placed in circumstances which went far towards forming the wonderful character which he became. So it was with Samuel, one of the brightest ornaments of our race. His earliest lessons were received under the curtains of the sanctuary. So it was with David, — the mighty warrior, the great and admired king, and the sweet singer. He was a mere youth when he nerved his heart and his arm to meet the lion and the bear, and the champion of Philistia ; and when he began to touch that sweet harp, — the harp whose tones will never die away, till after the funeral of this earth, he kept the sheep among the hills. So it was with Jesus Christ himself, — and so with the learned and burning Paul, who laid the foundations of his character at the feet of Gamaliel. It needed an iron cradle to rock such a character as that of George Washington ; — and every child in the land knows that the germs of his character were seen in very early life. I dwell upon

this point, because I would impress upon the young before me, that if they neglect now to lay the foundations of their future characters, they never can, and never will. You may live upon future hopes, and upon promises for the future; but, let me tell you, — and you will find stern facts to stand by the assertion, that if you ever have character, and become men known, respected, influential, and of any worth, you must now dig down deep, and lay the foundations of your future character.

III. *Character, to be valuable, must be of slow growth.*

This follows from the very elements of character. No man can lay claim to be a man of character, who cannot control himself. He must be able to control his temper, his lips, his passions, his envy, his jealousy, and his covetings. But self-control is not to be acquired in a day. It will cost many struggles, many efforts, much girding up of the loins, ere you can arrive at that state. It is not that the blood of youth is so much hotter, that he is so much more liable to lose self-control than the man in mature years, but because he has not acquired the habit of controlling himself.

And you need long and severe discipline, ere you can arrive at that point. When Turenne was marshal of France, as he was walking the streets, a young man came up and spit in his face. The Marshal took his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his face, and calmly said, "Young man, if I could wipe your blood from my conscience, as easily as I can wipe my face, I would run you through with my sword!" Now what made this action so great? Evidently the entire self-control which he had acquired; but it undoubtedly had cost him years of continued effort, before he could acquire such command over his spirit. This makes a part, and not a small part, of character,—and this cannot be put on at once, as you would put on a new coat. It must be of slow growth. Character, too, requires much observation, much accurate comparison, much individual experience, much sober reflection, and accurate thought. Time is absolutely essential to all this. You can often find young men who are good company, and who have great conversational powers, as they are called; but it is impossible but that a great part of what they say must be random shooting; because,

God has so created us, that we can grow wise only by experience and observation. Hence, when such a man as Franklin spoke in his mature years, every word was gold, for it was all the result of observation and experience. It is sometimes a matter of surprise, that a few words from age and experience will have more weight than ten times the amount from a young man. Hence it is, that "a good name is better than precious ointment," — because character, which is here meant by "a good name," is the result of long observation and great experience. There is a weighing the subject, — a cool deliberation about a man of character, which gives his opinions great weight. His judgment has become sound and discriminating, and founded on much information and mature thought. I say these things, because young men are sometimes impatient to be wise and great at once. They want to leap at once into that character and that standing which will give them great influence. But let me say kindly to them, that they are warring against God's providence. You cannot get the community to put confidence in you as a man of character, till they have

watched you a long time, — not till they are satisfied that you have habits of self-control ; — not till they are satisfied that you have had much experience, and have had great opportunities to make up your judgment. Did you never notice that a man who is anxious to have his opinion weigh heavily, is very apt to preface that opinion by saying, that he has had experience on that point ? This is intuitive. And therefore you must put it down as a law of God, that character must be of slow growth.

IV. There is only one foundation on which character can safely rest, and that is the fear of God.

No man can have influence among men, unless he has been in circumstances in which he has been tried by temptations, seen and unseen. And no man can long endure temptations unmoved, unless he has a conscience that acts in the fear of God. The human eye cannot be upon you much of the time ; and when you turn over your thoughts, and lay your plans to do this or that, you are alone. Who thinks of committing a crime, which he has not thought over, and planned over, and

acted over in imagination, many times, before he committed it? It is, then, when you are alone, when evil first begins to assail your soul, that you need to have a conscience awake, quick and decided. Nothing else can shield you, till your habits of thought, of feeling and action, are so matured, that you are safe. A young man wants spending-money; he can get it by going directly to the drawer of his employer, and taking it; or he can do it by charging an extra price to some unwary purchaser, or he can give scant measures here and there. These are all secret temptations to lay the foundations for a dishonest character. What can make the young man so tempted, do right at all times, unless he has a conscience that fears the eye of an omniscient God? There is another reason why the fear of God is essential to permanent character; and that is, that the young man who takes his destiny into his own hands, and attempts to carve his own way through life, without seeking and obtaining the blessing of God, makes a mistake at the very outset, which will prevent his becoming what he desires. There is only One who is wise, or good, or strong; he

is the fountain of all these, and he who seeks wisdom, or goodness, or strength at any other source, makes a radical mistake. I do not pretend that all great men have been what we usually denominate religious men; but all who have had characters which combined the elements of real character, have been men that feared God. Let the creature of yesterday, without experience, without observation, with strong and wrong appetites and passions, attempt, in this world of temptation, to go through life without God as a guide, protector and friend, and he may be sure he has a great error lying at the very foundation of his character. He has placed himself on the ocean of life, not having a chart or compass, -- without knowing a single star in the heavens, and without a single promise, on all the pages of the Bible, that God will protect, or guide, or bless him. How many young men commence the race of life with very strong hopes, and yet never reach to the possession of character that is valuable! How many start with ambition enough, and perhaps with the avowed purpose of becoming president of this nation, but who, in after life, are found to be very hum-

ble school-masters ! They began life without building their character on the fear of God ; and therefore its only foundation was sand.

I can hardly name a temptation so great, so fearful to a young man, as that of handling money which is not his own ; and if I were to offer a special prayer for my son, it would be that he might not be tempted in this way. Few, very few can withstand it. And at the present time it has become so common, I had almost said so fashionable, for men and boys to spend what is not their own, that the moral sense of the community has received a shock from which, I am afraid, it will not soon recover. If you steal an over-coat, to shield you from the blast, the watchman's rattle will soon make you sensible that you have disgraced yourself, and you are a thief. But if you have taken and used tens of thousands of money not your own, you are not a thief ! — you are only a — defaulter ! And so common has it become, that the sense of shame is almost gone, — and the sense of guilt seems entirely gone. I can now carry back my mind to my college days. There was a youth in the next class, remarkable for his simplicity

and economy of dress, and for his republican habits. You would suppose that gold and copper would be alike in his eye. He grows up, enters upon his profession as a lawyer, marries into a very respectable family, and is accounted an honest man! He becomes an officer in a money corporation. You meet him at the Springs, and in the best of society. I take up a paper this very week, and read that —— ———, Esq. is a defaulter for several times ten thousand dollars! The pure-minded youth, — the stern lawyer, who has probably prosecuted many a poor wretch for stealing a few dollars, — has been tempted, and who is surprised that he yielded? Who is surprised that he is denominated only a — defaulter! We have almost come to this, that places of trust and of handling money, mean little more than places where those may help themselves who can obtain the posts! and it is almost thought to be cowardly, and hardly worth a paragraph in the daily paper, to be a defaulter for a moderate sum! We shall be told that there are high-minded and honorable men at these posts still. We have no doubt of it. That there are honest poor

men who daily handle thousands of money. We do not doubt it. But who does not know that confidence is so shaken between man and man, that the whole community are in unutterable anguish !

Oh ! that these young men, just coming upon the stage of action, might take warning from the fearful disclosure now so common ! I would have them remember that no man becomes a monster, in any crime, at once ; — that there is hardly such a thing as the first crime in dishonesty ; — that he who allows himself to borrow a shilling out of his master's drawer, with the secret determination to repay it, has begun a downward course from which he will be very likely never to recover ; — for he that is unjust in that which is least, is unjust in that which is much ; — and the same heart which to-day prompts you to become a defaulter for the shilling which you hope to pay, but hope in vain, will hereafter, if you have the opportunity, lead you to take tens of thousands which are not your own. How fearfully common is it, to see it announced that such a man, supposed to be a pattern of integrity, of morality, of religion even, — who

was supposed even by his wife to be upright, and honorable, and affluent, has turned out to have been a knave for years! Oh! never did I understand, till lately, how awfully great is the temptation, when we have the handling of money not our own! Most tenderly do I warn these young men of the danger; most earnestly do I beseech them not to desire to see money not their own; not to handle it; and above all, never, never, *never*, borrow a farthing unknown to the lender, with the secret promise of returning it. The first time you do that, you have begun to let out the waters, and you will dig more and more, till you are carried away by the flood, beyond the possibility of ever regaining the shore, and beyond ever returning to the place of innocence — the only safe spot!

After these introductory remarks, I proceed to point out the temptations which particularly beset young men in large cities. Among these we may place,

I. *The temptation to be vain.*

At no period of life do we make larger drafts upon Hope, than while young. We have had no experience as to the difficulties

which we may encounter—how hard it is to accomplish much in such a world as this, or how feeble is the arm which we must use. It is very much easier to lay plans, build castles in the air, and determine what we *will* do, than to accomplish our plans. It is easier to feel that we certainly shall do great things, and to be vain of our imaginary achievements, than actually to achieve any thing. How often do the young feel that they may challenge admiration because, before they die, they are to do great things! How often do you find men quite modest at fifty who, at twenty-one, were persuaded that they were to accomplish great things! Probably the student never sees the time when he is so great or so learned, as during the first month after having entered college. After that time, to the grave, he feels himself to be growing less and less. And in all professions a man grows modest with age and experience. He finds that he is not so strong, so wise, so great, nor so important as he supposed himself to be. What harm then does the vanity of the young man do him, if time and age will correct it? I reply, that it leads him to place a false estimate on things; and to feel that he

can lay claim to notice, to distinction, and even to deference, on grounds that are often ridiculous. It is easy in the large city to acquire a kind of smartness of manner, of dress, of conversation, or of appearance, which is valuable only in the eyes of the weak-headed, and ridiculous in the eyes of the wise. How great is the temptation, where dress is so easy to be made perfect, to adorn the body in which the soul lives, and after you have done it, call upon the spirit within to worship the temple which you have adorned? Why is it so dangerous, and almost so sure to ruin a *young* man here to be left to handle wealth as his own? Because his vanity tells him that this is a sufficient foundation on which to build character and happiness for life:—and that he has self-command enough to use it aright; when the fact is, he is deceived by his vanity in all these respects. What made the young Pharisee, who came running to Jesus Christ to be taught the way to eternal life, so mistake his character that he supposed he had kept the spirit of the commandments, when in reality he had only kept the letter? Was it not that same vanity which so often puffs up the heart

of the young and makes him self-righteous? What makes the young man so quick to resent an insult, or to revenge a wrong? Is it not an over-estimation of his own consequence, and a determination to make others respect him as much as he respects himself. What makes him so ready to believe there is something peculiar about himself, something in his character, his form, his countenance, the shape of his forehead, or even the color of his hair? These trifles—which have no more to do with character,—unless they prevent your forming character that is valuable, than the texture of the paper on which the note is written, has to do with the value of that note,—are easy to be picked up in the great city. These are deemed sufficient, and thus vanity leads you to rear character upon a foundation of sand. We do not wish to blame you for drawing upon the hopes of other years; our hearts would sink and break if we could not do it; but we wish to warn you that the young heart is tempted to be a vain heart. Let any man of forty-five read over the letters which he wrote to his bosom friends at twenty-one or twenty-two, and I will warrant that he will

read with amazement. He can hardly realize that his mind ever dictated such letters. That bowing of the head and that quiet meekness of spirit, which you see in men of mature years, and which you are in danger of mistaking for disappointed vanity and abortive ambition, is frequently nothing more nor less than the modesty which experience brings to occupy the place of early vanity. And that resigning of the world, and that withdrawing from it which you see in age, and which you may mistake for a mournful feeling that it can drink the pleasures of earth no more, is often nothing else than having the soul in a position to take a right view of things, and having it compare earth with heaven, and time with eternity. After years have brought their experience to us, we cannot be cheated by the vanity of our hearts to believe, that men, or things, or conditions, here, are of much consequence; and if the spirit of the Gospel sanctifies this experience, we feel that we shall leave this imperfect state none too soon.

II. *Young men, in great cities, are strongly tempted to waste their time.*

The life of a mortal here, is a little portion

of existence previous to his entering upon an eternal state. The great object of life, then, is to prepare yourself to enter upon that eternal state to the best possible advantage, i. e., so that it will be the happiest possible. Now the glory of the Godhead consists in his goodness, — his doing good to created beings. And in his estimation, that man is the greatest man, and the most to be honored, who lives to do the most good to others. The man, then, who passes through life and does the least good to men, is, in the divine estimation, the least worthy of reward or honor. “He that wishes to be great among you, let him be the servant of all.” Every man is placed here, not merely that he may himself find eternal life, but also, that by his intercourse with men, his influence and his character, he may lead them to eternal blessedness. This is the great object of life on earth. Time, then, must be improved, if you would have an influence on others. And there is no period in all your life when time is so valuable, as when you are young ;— because, whatever you then learn, will abide through life. If in the morning of life you store the mind with knowledge, — if you cul-

tivate the taste by reading what is pure, — if you refine and elevate the feelings by communing with the mighty dead, all will abide with you through life. If you dissipate the mind by foolish reading, or more foolish companions, you can never expect to have a balanced and well-stored mind. If you corrupt the heart and imagination while young, you have planted the seeds of a cancer in the soul, which will grow and eat deeper and deeper till you reach the grave. The habits, too, — all the habits of thought, of conversation, of thinking, and of spending time, which you form in youth, will be likely to cling to you all the way through life. You may hereafter struggle with them, and try to throw them off; but they are bound to you by seven green withes, and you cannot get rid of them. Oh! I have seen men shed tears, and I have been ready often to shed tears myself, over that waste of time in youth which formed habits not to be changed. At a time of life when you do not feel accountable for that which you have not yet acquired, but which you may acquire, look well to the manner in which you spend your time. How are you tempted to waste your time? I reply,

1. *In light and foolish company.*

In the great city there are multitudes of young men who find time to be idle, to seek society, and to corrupt others. The aim of these idlers will be to allure those whom they deem a little above them, in point of respectability. Hence they will fawn and flatter,—will seek their company, and spend hours in that idle talk of the lips, which Solomon so pointedly condemns. One hour in the company of such, is not merely an hour of time lost, it has given them a kind of pledge that they may command your time again;—it is a letting down the standard of life;—it is creating a taste for company that is unworthy of you;—it is forming and fixing habits that will be likely to ruin you. You do not, at first, feel the loss of the hour or two of time; but you are about to go into the meshes of a net which will soon make you a helpless prisoner.

2. *You are tempted to waste your time in light and foolish, if not corrupt reading.*

That feverish excitement which is all around you, instead of giving you an appetite for sober history, and leading you to be wise by

the experience of those who lived before you, will naturally lead you to the exciting novel, and to the highest place in the world of romance. To meet the taste of the age, a common novel, filled with love and marriage, is altogether too tame. We must have pirates and highwaymen for heroes, and no seasoning short of blood, butchery, and murder, is at all fitted to meet the taste. The soul of youth is thus not merely habituated to crime, and blood, and murder, but to feel that all this is compatible with a heart that can love and be loved, and come back to virtue!—that an angel of light may carry a demon's heart, and be guilty of a demon's crimes, and yet be none the less fitted for his place before the throne of God! It is not merely time that is wasted, but sympathy, heart, pity and compassion are drawn out upon characters which ought, if suffered to live on earth at all, to live only in the deepest dungeons. Let no young man think he can feast over such dishes and keep his imagination and feelings from becoming morbid;—let none suppose they can rise up from such reading and go with pleasure to the sober duties of life, or to reading and thoughts that are ra-

tional. Let none suppose they can waste hours every day, or every week in such reading, and yet make up the loss by hard application in after times. You cannot travel with ease or safety the journey of life, if you waste the morning in stopping to gather flowers that are poisonous, and yet hope to make up the loss by hard driving at noon, or when the sun is setting.

3. Another temptation to waste time arises from the multiplicity of amusements in the great city.

I do not at this moment speak of the moral influence, but of their multiplicity. The multitude do not wish to read, to think, nor to work, all the time. They wish to be amused. Hence the multiplicity of new things, new shows, new wonders, is such, that if they cost nothing but time,—if they did not corrupt the morals, nor the heart, they would be dangerous. But this is more than can be said of them. I shall not degrade you so much as to begin to enumerate the abominations which are seen, and known, and heard in these places of amusement. Satan can devise no better recruiting-places for hell; for they are not

merely the highway thither, but they open directly into the abodes of the damned. Many are the parents who would be ready to weep tears of blood, if they knew that their sons were walking over these breathing-holes of the burning lake. The hours which you spend there, are not merely lost, but they set the soul in the wrong direction, and create a taste which cannot live in God's kingdom.

Morning and evening you can seize an hour for mental and moral improvement; and these hours will return daily; and I would most earnestly urge you to seize all these fragments of time, and improve them wisely. If thus improved while you are young, they will be invaluable all the way through life; they will give you information that will make you respectable, and habits of thought and of character, which no money can purchase. These hours are passing like swift waters, but they are carrying you over sands of gold.

III. *Young men in great cities are tempted to throw off parental restraints.*

Perhaps the sin that lies deepest in the human heart, is the desire to be independent. This made our first parents desire to be as

gods. This makes men cast off the authority of their Maker, and deny that they are his subjects, and accountable to him. And when the youth has left his father's house, and gone out from under the meek eye of his mother, he is strongly inclined to feel that it is manly and noble to forget the examples, the principles, and the wishes of his parents.

In no other spot do you see more striking instances of the wisdom and the goodness of God, than in constituting the family relation. How early do these silken cords bind the heart! How will they continue to hold it till severed by the hand of death! During all the days of childhood, while experience is coming, and while habits are forming, the parental relation holds, restrains, disciplines, and forms the character of the child. Almost as soon as the boy leaves his father's home, he begins to look forward to having a home of his own, and this becomes the object of his highest aims. This hope causes him to guard his character, his morals, and his steps, so that he may have no impediment to his hopes. And it is a powerful guardian. As soon as he comes to sustain the relations and responsibilities of a

parent, he has new claims to bind him to his home, to honourable industry, and to an honest character. He must be a brute indeed, who would spare any toil or effort to make his wife and children happy, respectable, and useful. To accomplish these ends, the remainder of life is spent: and thus, in the wise providence of God, the family relation is the golden chain which binds the hearts of men to their duty, makes them industrious and frugal, alleviates their sorrows, always holds out the light of hope, and paints a bright spot even on every tear. As no human institution can bear any comparison with this, so God has marked and defended it as his own. He insures long life to the child who honors his parents, and does all in his power to gladden their hearts, and he equally marks with his curse the child that forgets this duty. In this life does God step in and offer a present reward to the child, who will honor the age, the desires, the feelings, the wishes of that father who lives only for his child, and of that mother whose heart has forgotten its own pangs, that it may spend all its sympathy upon her child. It is not for the child to know the sleepless hours, the anxious

watchings which a parent endures; and when in the buoyancy of youth, when in the feeling of emancipation from parental restraint, the son goes to the great city, and there throws off the counsels, the warnings, the wishes of his parents, he does not merely do a cruel thing; he is guilty of the basest ingratitude to hearts that are beating only for him; and he is calling upon God to come in and blast him for his baseness. How strong is the temptation in the young man to feel that it is manly to throw away the tender emotions of his heart towards his parents—to feel that he cannot remember the lessons of childhood, and the instructions of home, without forfeiting that claim to independence and manhood which he now wishes to establish! Let me assure him that he will have opportunities enough to test his independence, and to try his manly decision in the rough voyage of life, without lifting his hand to smite the hearts that love him beyond all others. Let me assure him that the young heart which, like Byron's, can curse his own mother, will be most likely to see the day, even in this life, when like his, it will turn with a scorpion's

rage upon itself, and find no waters of life, and no voice of mercy, to still its raging.

History has consigned the name of Benedict Arnold to disgrace; and our young men must have great changes come over them, before they cease to detest such a character. Nay, can we believe there will ever be a time, so long as a single mountain in this land of the free, lifts its blue summit to court the breezes of heaven around its head, when the name of a traitor will cease to be execrated! But Arnold did not attain his strong character at a single leap: let it be remembered that, in his very youth, he followed a widowed mother to the grave—a mother whose heart he had broken by his own hard-hearted guilt! Who can wonder that the youth who could do this, would, in his manhood, be ready to sell his country and ruin her hopes for the sake of gold? I have never been surprised at his career, since I knew his treatment of his widowed mother!

Oh! if you would have the blessing of your God, the approbation of man, and the sweeter approbation of your own heart, do not raise a finger that will wound the feelings of your

parents. Do not be in haste to throw off their authority, and take your destiny into your own hands. Their hearts will soon be still in death, and I pray you, yield to no temptation that will, in years to come, cause you to look back with shame and grief, because you needlessly wounded their hearts. They feel desolate enough every time they go to your vacant chamber, and recollect the smiling days of your childhood—Oh, do nothing that will cause them to feel that they have lost their son in more senses than one!!

IV. *Young men in great cities are particularly tempted to violate the holy sabbath.*

The Sabbath is not only God's appointment, but it was made for man; and man cannot do without it, if he wish to attain the great end of his creation. The body, worn down by the hurry, the toil, the excitement of the week, needs it for its repose, and for recruiting its powers. The intellect, constantly called out during the week, needs it for a reposing place: and the heart, anxious, corroded, disturbed during the week, needs the Sabbath to hallow its beatings, and to lift its desires to a better city.

Whether you find man on the farm, giving his muscle and his sinew to honourable toil, or on the ocean, guiding his ship to the distant part of the earth, or in the study, cultivating his mind and storing the intellect with knowledge, or in the counting-house, calculating and balancing losses and gains, or whether you find him in the cabinet, laying great schemes, and great plans, and tasking his powers to their utmost, you find him withering under his burdens, if he does not keep the Sabbath as sacred time. The experiment has been made most abundantly in all departments of life, and it is fully settled that the man or the beast that rests on the Lord's-day, can accomplish more, and endure more, than by spending seven days each week in his duties.

The same is emphatically true of men in business. An attentive merchant remarked, that for twenty-five years he had watched those in New York, who kept their counting-houses open on the Sabbath, and that they had all failed, without a single exception. And if you will examine the question in this, or any other great city, you will very seldom find the merchant, or the bank, that takes the

Sabbath to square up its books, who do not, sooner or later, become involved in most serious disasters. "We have no Sabbaths here, in our business," said the captain of one of our western steamboats, to a sailor who could not conscientiously work on the Sabbath, in taking in and unloading goods. The man was discharged, though promised higher wages if he would return and violate the Sabbath. The sailor went to Europe, and on his arrival, the first paper he took up, informed him that the steamboat which "knew no Sabbath," had blown up, and nearly one hundred lives were destroyed!

Dr. Johnson, who will long, if not for many generations, bear the title of "great," made for himself the following rules in regard to the Sabbath.

1. That he would rise early on the Sabbath, and to that end, would retire early on Saturday night.

2. That he would engage in some unusual devotion in the morning.

3. That he would examine the tenor of his life during the week that was gone, and *mark* his advances in religion, or recession from it.

4. That he would read the Scriptures methodically, with such helps as were at hand.

5. That he would go to church twice.

6. That he would read books of divinity, either speculative or practical.

7. That he would instruct his family.

8. That he would wear off by meditation, the worldly soil contracted during the week.

Without stopping to inquire how many, or how few, at this day, will think me wanting in light, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe the Sabbath to be not only a special and a perpetual appointment of God, but I believe it one which he specially blesses by his providence ; and that when the history of men comes to be read in the eternal world, it will be found that those who honored the Sabbath the most uniformly through life, have been the most prospered and blessed in this life ; and that the following account, which was related to me on the best authority, is only one, among thousands of similar cases.

In one of our large cities, some years since, there was a poor boy, an apprentice in an apothecary's shop. He was very poor, but conscientious, and it was his solemn vow, on leaving home, that he would keep the Sabbath holy. As his finances were very slender, his

master one day gave him a recipe for making blacking, and loaned him money sufficient to get a few boxes made, with the assurance that he should have all the profits. The boy got his blacking done, and placed it in the windows, but nobody came in to purchase, till on Sabbath-morning, when a gentleman came in, and in great haste demanded a box of the blacking. The youth put out his hand to take it, — and then recollected that it was the Sabbath! Very reluctantly his arm fell, and his tongue unwillingly informed the customer, that he could not sell it on the Sabbath! The boy went to church; but even there, the image of his lost bargain haunted him, — till at last he told the tempter that he had done right, and would do so again! On opening the shop early on Monday morning, a man came in, looked at the blacking, and at once purchased all the lad had. He then paid for the materials and boxes, and found he had just a dollar left, — probably the first dollar he ever called his own. With more faith and fortitude than most possess, he takes his dollar, and in a few minutes has paid it to the Bible Society! His first and only dollar—

to the Bible Society! — feeling that *he* is safe, who honors God with the first of his increase. From these principles he has never varied; and he is now a most prosperous and a very wealthy man. Was he wise in honoring God's Sabbath and God's Word, when the temptation was very strong to do otherwise?

The testimony of Sir Matthew Hale, the Chief Justice of England, ought to be written in letters of gold, and hung up in the chamber of every young man in the great city. He says, "that of all the persons who were convicted of capital crimes, while he was on the bench, he found few only, who would not confess on inquiry that they began their career of wickedness by a neglect of the duties of the Sabbath, and vicious conduct on that day." The same distinguished Judge, after years of experience, gives the following testimony in regard to himself: "I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing the duty of this day, hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the

duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my success in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of observing this day; and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."

The temptation to the young man in the great city to break the Sabbath, is inexpressibly great. He has scores of companions who are old in the business of desecrating that holy day; they know where the cheapest boats and the cheapest cars start from, and for a few pence they can in a few minutes be out in the open country, where they can breathe free, speak free, and act free from all restraint. The very little respect which they have for one another is a small restraint. They lay plans to spend the next and the next Sabbath still more agreeably, till at length it is their *habit* to violate the Sabbath. And the young man, who has cut away from the restraints and the influences of the Sabbath, has gone far in the path to ruin. He will not absolutely deny that there is a

God, but he will deny his accountability to him; and he who cuts himself off from accountability to God, will not long feel greatly pressed by his accountability to man. There is no other foundation on which you can rear responsibility in the human heart. Hence, if I wanted to take a young man, and make of him a terrible and a loathsome character,—one who would spurn human control, and gnash his teeth against human laws, and kick against any attempt to cover his shame and pollution, I would begin the work by destroying in that young man his reverence for the Sabbath;—and when I had got him so that he would trample under foot this positive institution of God, I should have no fear but he would quickly turn his back upon all others, till he became a monster in sin, and a terrific tool in the hands of the great Destroyer. To commit important trusts to a man who throws off his accountability to his God, is putting jewels, which you are sending to a distance, in a deep box whose top is put on with great care, but whose bottom is fallen out. Possibly they may be so crowded in, and the box be carried so carefully, that they will not be

lost; but it is much safer to be sure that the box has a good bottom to it. And he who feels that he can trust to his own strength of character, or principles, or education, when he refuses to feel accountable to the omniscient One, is, in the language of the Bible, a fool.

But I almost fear I am offending the Infinite God, when I speak to young men, and appeal to such motives as character, and success, and prosperity, and blessings for time. I stand on higher ground; and I have higher and holier motives to urge; and I tell them, that when they cast off the authority of God, and begin to do it by casting away his Sabbaths, they have assumed the fearful responsibility of taking the destiny of a deathless spirit into their own hands. I say to that young man, whose hopes now begin to open,—whose heart to pant for future good,—who is about deciding the question, whether he will be a well-dressed animal, or a being of thought,—whether he will be a creature of time, and live for this world alone, or whether the whole of his existence shall be taken into the account,—I say to him that he has more involved in these decisions than merely the questions which re-

late to a life that may end to-morrow ; — he has now the forming of a character, and the training of a spirit committed to him, which will eternally be an angel of light, or a demon in sin and guilt. That burning, restless, turbid soul, tells of its own immortality. It is on its way to eternity, to carry there the habits, the feelings, the character here acquired. God has placed it under his laws, and his commands, and so long as you obey these, your destiny is safe. But it is an easy matter to let the soul out from under his authority, — and hundreds can aid you to do it ; but when once done, a world cannot insure your ever coming back. A feeble hand may raise the bars and let a lion out of his cage, and from under the authority of his keepers ; but no human hand can catch him and lead him back. So long as you keep the Sabbath, you have placed yourself under God's blessing ; you have the shield of omnipotence thrown over you, and all the fiery darts of the adversary fall harmless at your feet ; — but when you have laid that aside, you have publicly said to your God, that you are ready and willing to take your own eternal destiny out of his hands. Oh !

when you decide to throw away the Sabbath, you have decided to add another hand to those already busy in cutting the only cords that hold this republic together ; — you are taking off that which binds men to obey human laws ; — you are deciding that your wisdom is greater than the wisdom of Him who made the Sabbath for man ; — you are putting out the light which God hath kindled by which to guide you through this dark world, to the world of perfect light ; — you are staking your strength against his cause, — your arm against his Omnipotence.

Take away the moral influence of the Sabbath, feeble as it is in our great cities, and there is no other check, or stay, or prop to society. You can show no other means by which you can create, or keep conscience enough to preserve society ; — for there would be no crime so gross, that it would not find admirers, — no impurity so beastly that it would not find shameless supporters, and no guilt so dark that it would not unblushingly walk abroad at noon day. Oh ! my young countrymen ! by the love of that civil freedom which our fathers thought cheaply purchased

with their blood, — by these free institutions, the wonder and the admiration of a world, — by the hopes of those parents and friends whose hearts and souls are bound up in your prosperity, — by the love of that Redeemer, who purchased your soul at the cost of his own blood, — by the hopes of that eternal life which awaits the child of God beyond the grave, — and by the joys or the sorrows which will there surely and eternally be yours, — I do beseech you, throw not away the Sabbath of God! Make it your palladium; — your hiding-place from danger and storms, and your Mizpah, — the watch-tower of your salvation: then shall a thousand fall on your right hand, and ten thousand on your left, but you shall never be moved. The name of God will everlastingly defend you.

LECTURE VI.

DANGERS PECULIAR TO YOUNG MEN IN GREAT CITIES.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto, according to thy word.”—Ps. cxix. 9.

TRUTHS which are of universal and daily application, are often quaintly, but forcibly expressed by proverbs. “An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure,” is one of these proverbs. The very structure of our nation is designed to make us an agricultural, a manufacturing, and a commercial people;—and yet the father of our country gives his last advice that we be always prepared for war; and the reason was, that he saw that this was only another way of advising us to prevent wars, and thus to live in peace. A single word will sometimes explain an action, and save a community from a quarrel; but when the flame is once kindled, you find

a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong castle. A young man might be walking on the brink of a precipice, and a single step might plunge him down to destruction, when one word of caution might cause him to take heed to his steps, and save him from death. My text asserts three very important truths, viz., that the young man is in peculiar danger, and needs to have his way cleansed; that he can only do this by taking heed—that is, foresee and anticipate his danger; and that he make the word of God his guide in doing it. And in pointing out the dangers of young men, if by the grace and goodness of God I am able to do any good, it must be chiefly to those who have not yet been led away in the paths of ruin. The most skilful pilot can do nothing to aid the ship which has already struck out of the channel and plunged into the quicksands. She must lie there, and heave and flounder, till she goes out of sight. And those young men who have already plunged away into scenes of dissipation and guilt, are generally too far gone to be recovered. They will shortly sink down beneath the waves of oblivion, remembered only by a few broken-

hearted friends who live to mourn over hopes that are blasted, and expectations that are withered. It is not to these that I speak. But it is to those who as yet have lost but little of the innocence, the ignorance, and the purity of youth. It is to those whose hearts have not yet become the highways for the spirits of darkness and pollution, whose hopes have not been sullied by open sin, and to whom the future opens a glorious arena, on which they are determined to wrestle with the strong temptations and trials of life in such a way, that they may never hang the head in shame, may never blush to meet the pure eye of a mother, may never cringe before the smitings of a guilty conscience. I love to feel, and I will feel, that I am addressing hearts that are full of hope, full of generous feeling, full of noble resolution, and full of manly anticipations; and hearts that have come together, not to quarrel with the speaker, but to listen to the hints of one, who has just passed through the dangers of youth himself, under circumstances peculiarly trying. I love to feel, and I will feel, that I am addressing hearts that have not yet been so fascinated by the glitter of life, so

led away by temptations, and so hardened by contact with sin, that they are ignorant only of what is good. No, I will believe, that those before me to-night, will allow me to entreat them as my younger brothers, and warn them in the tones of an anxious parent. For years, I have been trying to seize time enough to address the young men of my country, my whole country, in relation to their position, their privileges, and duties—living, as they do, on such a soil and in such an age of the world. I have less and less expectation that I shall ever find time to do it in a manner in any respect commensurate with the importance of the subject, or proportionate to the interest which I feel in the welfare of this portion of our nation. May God put it into the heart of one who can hold an abler pen. In the mean time, I rejoice to be able to throw out now and then, a hint to the young men around me as I have opportunity.

In every part of this world are the footsteps of God visible, and the marks of his own powerful hand to be seen, except in the great city. Do you stand on the deck of a ship as she crowds her way over the pathless wilds? The hoarse

roar of the great deep, the hoary crest on the billows of the old ocean—the awful solitude, and the indescribable sense of loneliness, teach you that God is there, and you almost seem to see him walking on the waters. The few planks beneath you are all that you see of what man has done; and that seems small indeed, and you feel that these waters could be poured from no hand but his. And if amid the howling storm, you see the little bird scudding over the crested wave like a spirit which the storm has raised, you feel that the little wanderer must be under the guidance of a Being who must ever be there—and who has taught it to select this curious home, confiding in his care.

If you stand on the top of the lofty mountain, and see the snows, which the summer cannot remove, lying thousands of feet beneath you,—and see the clouds swelling with storms, thousands of feet beneath you, while other mountains all around shoot up their cloud-covered heads, looking as if a stormy ocean had, at a word, been turned into a rock, and every angry wave had in a moment been petrified, you feel that you are alone. You may shout, and your voice has no power; and

you feel that God is there:—that he reared these mountains by his own power and greatness, and that he walks alone in the solitude of his own works.

If you walk the wilderness alone, — where the breezes of heaven cannot be felt, where the beams of the bright sun never penetrate, and where it is too lonely even for the songster to whistle his wild notes, you feel that this is the home of Solitude, and in the silence of his chambers you hear the voice of God. You are almost afraid to disturb the silence—for God must be there.

If you stand at the foot of the cataract, where the unmeasurable waters are poured down with mighty thunderings, and shakings of the earth, you feel that God is there, pouring these waters from his own hollow hand.

“Deep calleth unto deep. And what are we
That hear the question of the voice sublime?
Oh, what are all the notes that ever rung
From war's vain trumpet by thy thundering side?
Yea, what is all the riot men can make
In this short life, to thy unceasing roar?
And yet, bold babbler, what art thou to Him,
Who drowned a world, and heaped the waters far
Above its loftiest mountains? — a light wave
That breaks and whispers of its Maker's might!”

In all these places, God is seen and felt. In the solemn silence of darkness you hear his footsteps, and in the thunder, his voice. But when you come into the great city, every thing tends to shut God out of the human mind. Every thing tends to make men animals. The multitude here rush, but they rush to gain what pertains to earth and sense. All the footsteps which you see, are the footsteps of man. Nothing meets the eye but what the ingenuity and the labor of man has produced. The lofty buildings, the splendid exhibition of things manufactured, are all the works of man. If you walk the streets, you see nothing, hear nothing, think of nothing, but what man is doing. The night cannot here draw down her curtains and shut man from your sight and hearing. There is no solitude here in which you can withdraw the mind and feel God to be present. No: the glitter and blaze and thunder of night make the power of man still more perceptible, and you no more think of Him who created and sustains the mind and energy that puts all this machinery in motion, than you think of the dark coal out of which we draw the gas that

makes a light so brilliant. We go to a sister city, and we are whirled there in a space too short to see what we pass, and we no more see God's hand in creating the country over which we fly, than we do in giving power to man to press so frail a thing as vapor into his service, and to make it draw him with the speed of the winds.

We here see skill in architecture, in sculpture, and in painting; and we learn to talk about the works of the best artists and the best musicians; but we have nothing to lead us to think of Him who created the mind and the skill of the painter and the musician. Man, man alone is to be seen here. The city was built by him and for him; and hence, the longer a man lives in the great city, the greater the danger that he become more and more a mere animal. For as we have to do almost wholly and constantly with what is material, we shut out that God who keeps the mighty pulse of the great city in constant motion, who holds all in his hand, and by checks and balances, guides all and controls all. We forget "how the principles of justice establish checks and counter-checks, so that

no single power shall be predominant; how poverty and riches alternate, and how the vices of the bad are made to call forth the virtues of the good." Oh! if we might renew our conviction that "God is indeed here, as well as present in the more peaceful and harmonious portions of his creation, we might renew our faith, and enjoy perpetual refreshment for our souls." Such are the temptations to shut God out of the mind, from the very circumstances in which young men are placed in a great city. If, then, you add to this that wilful neglect of God which the heart, having all its passions awakened and called out under the glare and glory of materialism, and pressed on all sides to give its thoughts and feelings to things seen, the danger is unspeakably great. When you find that you are so situated that you can obtain no such thing as solitude, and that even in the most secret chambers, there are no hopes of retiring beyond the noise which men make, and when you find that your own heart chimes in and aids you to shut God away, how fearful the danger that you do it, and continue to do it, till you deny your accountability to him! Atheism seems to spring up very natur-

ally in the human heart; and where the circumstances are favourable, it grows most rapidly and luxuriantly. How are you tempted to forget that hand which every morning lifts up the curtains of darkness, and meets you by his mercies! During all the night, He has stood by your bed, renewing and reviving and recruiting your wearied system: that hand which keeps your reason and faculties all in order,—which gladdens you by his sun, cheers you by his moon, and warms your heart by hopes that embrace all that time and all that eternity can yield! Oh! if you had a friend for whom you had done a thousandth part as much as God has done for you, and who should treat you as you treat him, neglecting and forgetting you, how would you say, he is no friend,—he is a monster! What you owe to your God is what human language is unable to describe. That you were not created to be a tree or a beast that perisheth—that you were not a cripple or maimed all your days,—that yours has not always been the unmeaning eye and the sickening laugh of the idiot;—that yours was not a birth amid the darkness of heathenism;—

that your body has not for years been mouldering in the dust of death,—that yours is not a lot among the outcasts from human society and human sympathies,—that your hopes are not all dark for this life, and darker still when you look beyond this life, — all is owing, my young friends, to the fact, that you have ever been, and ever will be, in the hands of a God whose name is love, and whose nature is infinite. And now will you yield to the temptations of your situation, and shut him out of your heart and mind and thoughts, and try to drive the car of your destiny yourself, — neglecting the only Being who can give you to drink of the rivers of pleasure for evermore?

1. *Young men in great cities are strongly tempted to gamble.*

It seems to be a part of original sin to wish to get money in an easier way than to earn it by the sweat of the brow; and hence, wherever men, with such hearts as men have, congregate together, civilized or savage, they will have the means of gambling. All large cities are abundantly supplied with the means, and the temptation. From the boy on his knees on the dirty side-walk playing marbles, up to

those gorgeous houses commonly called "hells," and where half a million of money is probably sometimes, if not often, lost in a single evening, you may find all and every kind of implements for gaming. If you move in a certain sphere, you will be invited to the back room of the fire-engine house, or into the corner of the low dancing-house. If your taste is for a more athletic mode of gambling, you will find the bowling-alley in almost any direction, where you may lull the conscience by telling her that you are only taking that exercise which is very necessary. And not unlikely you will soon find yourself holding this dialogue on the Sabbath itself. If you wish for a different kind, you can always find the room furnished with cards in abundance. If you desire a more bewitching species still, you will find the billiard-room open at all hours of the day and the night, and so near the halls of justice that you must keep the windows down, lest by striking the balls, you disturb the Judges on the bench. If your means will allow you to go up still higher in this scale of certain ruin, you have only to get introduced into a regular club-house, and your destiny is fixed. In

all these places, you will find companions to tempt and aid you, excitement to draw you on, strong drink to stimulate you, avarice to urge you, and the spirits of darkness to whisper peace to your conscience.

The Bible speaks of the "mystery of iniquity;" and undoubtedly among all these mysteries, there are but few greater or more terrific, than the mysteries connected with gambling. Those who are once drawn into them seldom get out; and men who have begun by staking thousands at a single throw, have often ended their career by being kicked out of a roulette gambling-hole, for the want of a penny to pay for a pipe. There is a fascination about it which is wholly indescribable; and young men have been known to hang round the billiard-table, forgetting their duties, their business, their meals, and their sleep, till they were stripped even of the coats on their backs.

A great painter has admirably illustrated this propensity and this passion, when he shows you the soldiers on the ground engaged in gambling at the very moment the decision was making that the Son of God should be put

to death. They were too much engaged to look up, or take any interest in the scene !

Every feeling drawn forth by this passion is the feeling of the damned, and no name could be more appropriate than the term "hell," for these places. And if the feet of any of my young friends have ever trodden these haunts—if ever your hands have been polluted by handling the instruments of the gambler, let me whisper in your ear that if you are not lost for time and for eternity, it will be little less than a miracle. We would not and do not limit the Holy One of Israel ; but all observation and experience will show you, that where one victim has been recovered and saved, twenty, at least, are ruined for ever. Of the different forms of this temptation, or the hosts who act the part of the stool-pigeon and the decoy-duck, or the power of the demon when once he has gained an entrance into your heart, I know next to nothing ; but I know enough to say, that very few who ever begin, are recovered and saved. We know there are gamblers who live by the profession—who wear the finest coat, and the richest diamonds sparkle in their bosom, but could we see the

poor wretches whom they have destroyed and thrown aside, the hearts of fathers and mothers which they have coolly wrung till they were hushed in death, could we see the victims whom they have sent to the dark world to curse them and their own folly, we should look upon these—not as *men*—but as awful demons, who have got permission to borrow human bodies, and to come up to earth to do a work, which is too refined to be performed in hell! “Oh! my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united! Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel.”

II. *The young men in great cities are strongly tempted by theatrical amusements.*

As the space which I can devote to this danger must be brief, you will permit me to say what I have to say in very plain English, and with very little circumlocution. As I was never inside of a theatre in my life, and do not know even their construction, and as I have hitherto had no aid from them, either in educating my mind for usefulness, or in fulfilling the duties of my profession, you will not deem me ungrateful even if I should not speak

with great reverence of these schools for the young. At any rate, I shall not be charged with slandering a friend who has done much for me.

The theatre was first opened about five hundred years before Christ, in Greece. The Olympic Games, which drew all Greece together, and to which allusion is more than once made in scripture, have been thought to be the parent of the theatre. But the Olympic Games had a very different origin and object. The object of these games was three-fold. First, to have something to draw and bind all the states of Greece together in one feeling. Second, to inculcate physical education, and train men up to become soldiers: and third, to create and perpetuate a love of national glory. It became a mighty exhibition of the talent of the nation. There the conqueror went to show his crown; there the sculptor to exhibit his statue of Jupiter; there the poet to recite his verses; there the historian to read the last chapters of his history; and there the sun-burnt traveller went to relate his discoveries. It was the focus of the intellect, and heart, and strength of Greece.

But the theatre had its origin in the drunken, beastly rites of Bacchus, when the maddened of both sexes paraded the streets during the feast, naked, polluted, and loathsome. It was soon discovered to be too vile even for heathen Greece, and the theatre was put down by law. From Greece it passed into pagan Rome, where for a time it was again suppressed by law. And when Constantine was on the throne as a Christian emperor, he shut all the theatres in his kingdom. As Christianity sunk down, they were again opened, and have been open ever since, and have destroyed more young men in all our large cities — I like to have said—than all other things put together. The following are the ways in which they destroy our youth :

1. *By wasting the time.*

Were there no other item, this would not be a small one. I have never heard it pretended that any one ever went to the theatre to receive instruction in morals, in religion, or in the science of life. The object cannot be better than amusement, on the most charitable supposition possible. On this ground, there must be time spent beforehand in talking

about it, thinking about it, preparing to go; the time while there, which must take till a late hour at night, and which unfits you to meet the duties of the next day. Let a book-keeper sharpen his pen the next morning, and rub his aching head, and see if he can accomplish much: or let the mechanic try and see if he can use his tools, command his thoughts and hands as well the day after going to the theatre, as if he had not gone.

2. *The theatre is very expensive.*

On this point I do not refer to the cost of the tickets merely—this is a small item in the bill. You must pay for those; you must go to the bar, or to the place of refreshment, with your companions; you must take your place and lot in affording them refreshments, and you must seem to be flush, and altogether above the vulgarity of minding expense; and you must dress as well as others, wear as fine cloth, carry as good a cane, and smoke as finely-flavored cigars. The mere ticket-offices in a sister city, New York, receive five hundred thousand dollars annually. Is this no expense? Is this sum of money well spent? Are the morals, the virtue, and intelligence of that city increased by it?

3. *The theatres corrupt the imagination and the heart.*

I have never heard any one justify the theatre *as it is*, but as it *might be*, or *ought to be*. But what are the elements which compose the fabric, and what is the philosophy of the theatre?

Let any one read Walter Scott's account of his first evening at the theatre, and he will see that it was the excitement of the scene, the brilliancy of the lights, the gorgeousness of the scenery and paintings, the thrilling music, and the excited audience that charmed him even at that early age. It is the very hot-bed of excitement. The characters assembled, the sober rules, which check men in assemblies for the worship of God, thrown aside, the efforts of art and music, and the very air breathes and creates excitement, to say nothing of what is represented. Much has been said about the licentiousness of the theatre. But a very small part of the story has been told. The most virtuous young lady, has her face there first crimsoned, if not the first seeds of unhallowed passion kindled, as she sees and hears what can never be repeat-

ed in a virtuous family. There the young man has his feelings excited, and his passions fired, till he is maddened:—the very air breathes of licentiousness, and that everybody knows. There, in crowds, whom you must pass and repass, and all in rows, stand and sit those whose house leadeth unto hell. Much has been said about reforming the theatre. It has been tried in England, and in Scotland, and in Boston, the cradle of the puritans, and the question is settled that a reformed theatre is dead the moment you reform it. You might as well undertake to reform a powder-house so that you can put stoves and fires in it, or reform alcohol so that you can drink it by the pint and not have it intoxicate. Clergymen and professed Christians used to go to the theatre in England, in hopes of reforming it. What think you was their success? The aliment on which the whole system lives and thrives, is licentiousness. You could not sustain one a single season, were you to banish the bar, and the vilest of the female sex. So sure is the theatre to carry licentiousness with it, that wherever you build one, you at once have scores of the vilest houses and haunts

spring up around it. A theatre built in a small town in England, some few years since, was immediately surrounded by dens of infamy, and it cost that one parish between six and seven thousand dollars in prosecutions, before they could abate the nuisance.

I may here say, and I wish it to be remembered, that the Bible is not merely a book of religion. It is a book of philosophy also. You will recollect how frequently, how earnestly, and how emphatically that book warns the young man against the enticements, and the words even, of abandoned women. Others may tempt and draw away, but she casts down her thousands and her strong men slain. The philosophy of it is, that one impure look from woman's eye, and one impure word from woman's lips, will do more towards polluting the imagination and destroying the heart of a young man, than any amount of temptation from his own sex. We look for purity in woman, and there we generally find it; and when we do not, her words are death. Let the mothers and sisters present, ponder this thought, and beware how, by the most distant expression or allusion, they awaken a wrong

feeling in the bosom of a son or a brother. It is this fact, in the constitution of our nature, that makes the presence of abandoned females so dangerous at the theatre, and which leads the Bible to place such stress upon their influence. There is one more fact in relation to this subject which ought to be kept in mind; and that is, when woman has once lost character and shame, she is not merely the corrupter of the unwary, but it becomes her settled plan to do all the mischief in her power. Lost herself beyond the power of recovery, she becomes possessed with a passion to spread a ruin as wide and as deep as possible. She goes to such places as the theatre, not merely as an enticer, but with the venom of a destroyer, and the malignancy of hell. You greatly underrate the danger if you suppose that licentiousness or the desire of money is her strongest passion. The demon of revenge is enthroned in her heart, and looks out of her eyes, and laughs in her smile.

4. *Theatres are ruinous, because they are the places where vicious character exerts its influence.*

Were I to select a teacher who should

make the deepest impression upon the young heart and character of my son, you surely would not think me over-scrupulous, should I demand at least, that the moral character of his teacher be good.

You have known a preacher of the gospel go into a community, and sobriety, schools, intelligence, temperance, industry, and religion, have followed. But did any one ever see such effects follow in the wake of the actor? You may reply, that this is not his aim; his business is to *amuse*, not to reform, or instruct. And is that right? Is it right for a being created to live eternally, on his way to the judgment-seat of God, in the company of a generation placed here on probation for a few days—is it right for any man to spend his life in amusing men, even were this all the hurt he did?

But this is not all. Even Rome in her pagan darkness, declared the profession of an actor to be infamous, and denied him citizenship. . And when they were about to rear a theatre in Geneva, the infidel Rousseau, who had written plays for the stage, opposed it with all his strength. “The situation of an

actor," says he, "is a state of licentiousness and bad morals: the men are abandoned to disorder; the women lead a scandalous life; the one and the other, at once avaricious and profuse, are overwhelmed with debt, and ever prodigal, and as unrestrained in their disposition, as they are void of scruple in respect to the means of providing for it. In all countries their profession is dishonorable." Such was the estimation in which an actor was held at Rome, that when Cæsar compelled the aged Laberius to go on the stage to recite some of his own works, so keenly did he feel the insult, that before he closed, he incensed the audience against the tyrant, by the following beautiful sentence. "After having lived sixty years," says he, "with honor, I left my house this morning a Roman knight, but shall return to it this evening *an infamous stage-player*. *Alas! I have lived one day too many.*"

It was once a matter of surprise to me, how it was, that a man who had spent a long life in study and in earning a good character, would be made a Judge, with a salary hardly sufficient to give his family bread, while an actor, who would be obscene enough to cor-

rupt a community, or a dancer whose great merit consisted in the most indecent exposure, would receive more in two or three evenings, than the Judge in a year ! But I think I understand it ! It is so respectable to be a good lawyer, that we can find men enough for Judges ; but it is so base a business to be an actor, or to show the naked limbs of a dancer, that comparatively few will descend to it ; and the community itself judge, that if such indecency is worth any thing, it is worth a great price. I have no doubt that there are as many men fitted to be actors, as there are men qualified to become Judges ; and as many ladies who are as well qualified, in every respect, to become dancers, except the heart, as any of those who do dance naked ; but the profession is so infamous that those who will descend to it, will long be rewarded for sacrificing every thing honorable in human nature. I hardly think they are too highly paid for what they *must* sacrifice, if money can be a compensation.

Who does not know that the stage is not the place where a single Christian virtue can be presented ? The virtues of the gospel are

patience, moderation, poverty, meekness, forgiveness, and modesty. How long would a theatre be tolerated that inculcated these? On the contrary, that pride of the heart, that ambition, that love of war, and glory, and self-aggrandizement, and that love of licentiousness, with which the gospel is at war, and which the gospel demands to be extirpated from the heart—these are what are represented on the stage. And the character which the actor assumes, and which for the time he must *feel*, if he is a good actor, is that of a wicked, and vicious character. When Garrick was boasting that he entered into the assumed vile character so as to feel that it was his own, “then,” says Johnson to him, “if you really believe yourself such a monster, you ought to be hanged every time you perform it.”

It may be said that the speaker does not know the effect of the theatre by his own experience. I bless God that I do not; for I greatly fear I should not have been in the pulpit if I had. Our lot would be a fearful one indeed, if we must individually experience all the horrors of every form of temptation and sin, before we could judge of it. Were you

to see me stand at the entrance of a street in which the plague was raging, and where the dead were lying in heaps, waving a flag, would you say, "Sir, you cannot stand and wave that flag, and warn us away,—you have never had the disease yourself, and know nothing of its horrors!" Alas! the evils of the theatre are not to be seen in our streets. You must thread these narrow lanes, and find there the young, polluted son sinking into an early grave—dying without hope or comfort—ruined by the theatre. You must go up the narrow creaking stairs in these narrow alleys, and find there, shivering and almost starving, the mother and the sisters, without friends or homes—thrown upon the cold world by losing the husband, the child, the father, and the brother, who were ruined by these places of amusement. You must go to the sweet country village, where the little dwelling sits embosomed in trees and flowers, and there you see the light burning night after night, as the poor weeping mother hangs over her boy who has returned from the city to die. Oh! how altered is that boy! He left her, ignorant and pure-minded. The rose was on his cheek,

and hope leapt from his eye, and manly promise was on his brow. Alas! he went to the great city; he went to the theatre, and this is the end of all here. But this is not the end of him. He carries a corrupt, polluted, and sin-bound soul into eternity with him, and he must carry that same character for ever. Oh! what a fearful mistake was that when for the first time he entered the theatre! There he first felt the intoxication of excitement; there he first learned to quaff the bowl, and there he first fell into the snares of her in whose house are the dead. If there be a young man before me who has never entered the doors of the theatre, I do beseech him never to enter; have it to say that there was one spot, and which is Satan's own synagogue, which you never trod. If there be one here who has been once, or twice, Oh! say now to God, that you will never do it again. And if there be those present who have gone many times, let me hope that the spell may not be so awfully upon them, that they cannot break it and live.

On the subject of licentiousness, as I have introduced it, so I may as well finish my remarks here.

The extent to which it prevails ; the temptations by which young men are assailed ; and the fearful extent to which they yield,—all exceed any thing that has ever found its way on paper. I need not go into particulars. But when women of the town are to be numbered by tens of thousands in every great city—when some of the most splendid houses are the gilded gate-way to hell—when it is known that men may have families and still frequent these places, and be called and treated as gentlemen still—when the most beautiful walks and squares are rendered unfit for the pure, and are therefore mostly abandoned by such—when young men are beckoned to by street-walkers as they sit with their mothers and sisters at the window of their father's parlor—when men are asked in open day to enter these houses of death—when the most cunning, artful, and deep-laid schemes are formed to entrap and ruin the reputation of ministers of the Gospel—when watchmen can live on the bribes which they earn simply by keeping silence—when all these, and thousands of such things, are of daily occurrence in the great city, will any one tell us the magnitude of the temptation to the young ?

And who shall describe to you, the number and the fate of the victims ! I speak not of the poor tempters themselves—few of whom live to be over twenty-two ;—I speak not of the physical curses, which no language can paint ; but I speak of moral death—a spot which the soul receives by every contact with this peculiar sin—a spot which all the waters of the flood could not wash out. I speak of that curse with which God will at once, and through all time, and through all eternity, visit the soul. I speak of that red-hot iron, which this sin, beyond all others, applies to the conscience to sear it ;—I speak of that woe which God hath promised when he hath declared, that neither fornicators, nor whoremongers, nor adulterers, nor the unclean, shall ever enter the kingdom of heaven. You will recollect that the devil which returns to the human heart, taking to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and who thenceforward dwell there, was an *unclean* devil. And wherever God writes over the door of life that this and that class shall not enter, he always mentions the unclean. Other sins you may leave behind you when you re-

move and go away ; other sins you may out-grow, and leave as you leave youth ; but this is a sin that you can never shake off. Once become the owner of a corrupted and polluted imagination, and your soul is for ever after a stranger to refined feeling, and even the Spirit of God can hardly make it sensible to sin. You are cursed with an internal leprosy, and if ever you find salvation, you have much food laid up on which remorse will feed. Your body may become old and feeble — a mere shell, and yet that unclean devil which you took into the mind in your youth, abides there still, and is the heavy curse to your soul. The waters of life cannot, this side of the grave, wash all the stains out ; and the fires of the pit beyond this life, will not be able to burn them out. Well does the Bible warn the young man to beware to cleanse his ways by taking heed thereto, according to the word of God. You *must* take the Bible and follow it on this subject, or there is no possibility of your being able to surmount the temptations which here surround you. Read the wisdom of Solomon on this subject, in the book of Proverbs ; and above all, read and

ponder that exhibition of the divine law which Christ has given when he says, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart."

III. *Young men in great cities are peculiarly tempted to satisfy the conscience by weak and vain excuses for sin.*

Probably there never was a sin committed since Satan rose up in rebellion in heaven, for which the heart did not form some apology. He did not want to sin and rebel, but the government of God became so oppressive, that he felt that he must try to draw away all heaven, and overthrow it. Eve did not want to sin, but the serpent beguiled her and deceived her, and so she sinned. Adam did not want to become a sinner, but his wife requested him to, and how could he help it? And at no period of life is the heart more ready to form vain and weak excuses for going against the conscience, than when young.

Why do you live regardless of God's will, and in the constant violation of his commands? —says the conscience.

Because I am young, — in the morning of life, and I have time enough hereafter. I ex-

pect to repent and leave off sinning before I die,—says the heart.

But who are those who repent and turn to God,—and when do they perform the work? The answer is, not your old grey-headed sinners who have drained every cup of sinful pleasure, and have worn out the body, and enfeebled the mind, in the service of sin and of Satan. Very few of these ever repent and find God; and very few indeed become the children of God after they have passed forty years of age. No, no,—if you ever make God your friend, it must be done while you can give him the dew of youth.

But others follow the world, say you, and why should not I do it too?

Because, my friend, you are more enlightened, are better instructed, have more conscience, and better know your duty, than others. Because the wise man should not walk in the paths of fools; and since you know the dignity, the end, the destiny of the immortal soul, why should you shut your eyes and become a mere creature of time, and feed upon ashes and the east wind?

But it is not convenient for me now to

attend to this subject, and break off my sins by repentance, say you.

So says the invalid when he awakens and finds that he has taken cold. It is only a cold, says he, and I cannot make it convenient to attend to it now; that slight cough and that excited pulse are of no consequence.

But let me impress it upon you that "death is only a GREAT COLD,"—and these slight symptoms have only to continue a short time, and your fate is sealed. You have but to let the disease of the heart alone, and you will make the ruin of your soul eternal and sure.

But I have no leisure just now, say you, to attend to the welfare of my soul.

And will you say that you do not waste time enough every day to read a short portion of the word of God, to offer a short prayer to God, and to deal with your heart as in his presence? You will, you *must* find time to die and time to be judged for all the deeds done here in the body, and must you not have time enough to provide a shelter for your soul,—time to seek and obey and serve your God?

But, says the heart, you make the door too narrow, and the gate too straight, and you demand too much of a poor worm of the dust.

I reply, that it is not I, nor any man, who has made these requirements. It is God who has created such a heaven, and provided such an immortality as he sees fit and best—and *He* has made the gate straight and the way narrow. If there be any controversy then, you must have it with your Creator and Judge, and not with me.

But, says the heart, my passions and appetites are strong, and I love pleasure.

Truly this is so; and the question is not, whether you have strong desires for what is sinful and forbidden; but where will they lead you? Which way is that heart now leading you—towards heaven, or away from it—towards God and holiness, or away from them? And is such a heart a safe one to follow?

But religion, say you, would make me melancholy, and I should feel gloomy all my days—and though these days of gloom must eventually come, yet I desire to have the morning of life unclouded.

I answer, you know nothing about it. You are supposing that if you should become holy, you would feel just as you do now; or rather

a great deal worse: that the clouds which now settle in the horizon of your vision would be drawn down in deeper darkness; but you forget that the Sun of Righteousness will scatter these clouds, and that light and peace and joy, and a hope full of immortality, would take the place of your present views of religion. Do you suppose that Paul, who could sing in the dungeon, who could exult in tribulation, who could rejoice in bonds, and shout in death, was an unhappy man?—or do you suppose that among all that uncounted multitude who stand before the throne of God, there is one who is dark, or gloomy, or sad, in the remembrance of the past, in the enjoyments of the present, or the hopes of the future? No, not one! And what do you say about that heart of yours, which would be made melancholy by what fills the hearts of the saints and angels in light with eternal joy? Is that such a heart as *you* ought to possess?

But, say you, if I were to set about changing my course, and following my conscience, I should have all my companions and friends against me. I should lose their friendship.

True: and whose friendship are you now

losing? What one among the pious on their way to heaven, or among all the redeemed who have reached heaven, feels that you are right? On what day of your life does the eye of God look down upon you with approbation? On what day of your life would you be willing to have death meet you, and have the question of the salvation of your soul to eternity decided by the fact whether God be or be not your reconciled friend?

But I shall meet with scorn and ridicule, if I change my course, and follow conscience and the Bible.

Whose scorn, whose ridicule would you meet? Will any mind that is really great or good, despise or ridicule a young man who is laying his plans for eternal ages, and is seeking the approbation of the Infinite God? It is very possible that a few very weak, very ignorant, and very wicked companions would, for a few times, ridicule you, — but in their hearts they would respect you the more; and in the hour of distress, or the hour of dying, they would call for such as have chosen God for the soul's portion. In all that cloud of witnesses who bend over you from the golden

walls of the New Jerusalem, not one would be found who would not approve and cheer you onward. What were the scorn and ridicule of men to Jesus Christ, or to his Apostles, when they looked at the glory that followed the cross of shame and suffering?

But I cannot, in my circumstances, say you, obey my God and my conscience without meeting with great trials and difficulties.

And who told you that you could? And where is the way which transgressors tread which is not hard? In what part of that way has God promised to meet and guide the sinner, to give his angels charge over him, and to make all things work together for his good? The difficulties which you meet with in the service of God, arise from within your own heart; and for these, the word of God, and the mercy of God have made abundant provision:—and those which you meet with, in living for time and sin, arise from the fact, that you are going counter to conscience, to the end for which you were created, to the providences and the plans of God, and therefore, that way must and will be darker and harder for ever.

But I am better than many around me,—
says the heart of the young man.

Alas! if you were not, you would be poorly off. You have had greater advantages, greater mercies, greater protection than others, and you ought to be better than many others. The question is not whether this be so:—no man is so far gone in sin, that he does not feel this to be true; but are you so living that you are to become a credit to your friends, a blessing to yourself, and an eternal recipient of God's mercy and goodness? If not, do not tell us about your being better than others.

But says the heart, there are so many differences among Christians; so many imperfections, that I had rather abide as I am.

And are there not differences among sinners too? Do they agree about politics, or men, or measures, or finances, food or clothing? Yet they all agree that government is necessary, and that certain measures and laws are necessary, that money and food and clothing are necessary. And so do Christians agree that the highest end of man's is the service of God, that sin is his abomination, and that holiness is essential to eternal life. If you are

perishing in the cold waters, and just about to sink, will you quarrel because of the dozen boats which put off to save you, no two are shaped precisely alike, or are painted with every shade of color alike? Of what consequence are these trifles to the drowning man?

But, say you, after all, there are so many hypocrites in the Church of God, that I do not like them.

What then? Does this prove that there is not a God under whose eye you must live, and by whom you must be judged? Does it begin to prove that there is no hell and no heaven? Hypocrites in the church! And are there not counterfeit bills, counterfeit gold and silver and precious stones? Would you refuse a beautiful diamond if offered you, because there are a great many counterfeits? Hypocrites in the church of God! And is this a reason why you should be a hypocrite in that church, or openly serve the devil without the church? There is a man at your right hand whom you acknowledge to be noble, great, kind, and good. He asks you to enter his service, and you refuse. Why do you? Is his service difficult? No. Are his wages poor? No,

none could be better. Is he unfaithful to his word? No, he never yet broke a promise. Why then do you hesitate? Because, say you, I am afraid that all who serve him are not his sincere friends!

But, say you, many commence the work of being Christians, and then fall back and disgrace the cause.

And do they not do so in every other cause? Do all make good merchants, good mechanics, good husbands, good fathers, or are all good in any department into which men enter? We know that many went back and walked no more with Jesus Christ; but would that have excused Peter and John, if they had done so? We know that one of the twelve apostles was a hypocrite and sold his master; but would that have excused the other eleven, if they had left Christ? We know that the unclean spirit may go out of a man for a time, and he may profess during that time, to enter into the service of God; and the unclean spirit may return, with seven others more wicked than himself, and they may make the last state of that man worse than the first; but is this an excuse for standing off and not serving or obeying God?

Then as to the sins and the imperfections of Christians;—on no point, probably, do men deceive themselves more than on this. They profess to admire the religion of Jesus Christ, but cannot endure the faults of his people. But they will palliate and excuse all these faults and many more, in their companions and associates. They will cherish the same sins in their own bosoms. So that it is not the sins of the church of God that troubles them so much. It is not that Christians have too little religion that disqualifies them for your taste, but because they have so much. Let a professed Christian commit an open sin, and you are shocked, and proclaim it from the house-tops; let an irreligious man do the same thing, and you do not grieve over it. I speak of this to show you, that you greatly deceive yourself when you suppose that it is the imperfections of God's people that keeps you from obeying him. Imperfections they have, and most deeply should they be mourned over; but can he sincerely mourn over them, when he does not mourn over the sins of his unconverted companions, or of his own heart?

Because, after serving God for a time—a mere

moment, compared with eternity—Satan and his angels choose to draw back and serve him no longer, is this a reason why Michael and all the holy angels of heaven should do so too? What if some do profess to enter upon the service of God and soon draw back, is this a reason why you should do that, or even worse than that?

But I do not, say you, believe in that strictness and severity of God which you so unceasingly hold up. I do not believe in that eternal hell for the sins of a short life.

Ah! and where did you find the notes of that sermon? Precisely the sermon which Satan, the great liar, delivered in Eden six thousand years ago! “Ye shall not surely die!” God will not fulfil the threatening and send his curse upon you for this one little sin, if it be sin! What if you do not *believe* that God will turn the wicked into hell, and all the nations that forget him, does this make it certain that he will not? Because in the buoyancy of youth, and under the strong stimulus of hope, you are able to persuade yourself that the Bible is not God’s word, or that some part of it is not his word, does that prove that you

can live and die as you now are, and be eternally happy?

But, says one, I am my own master, and I am determined to have my own way.

Are you your own? Did you create yourself? Why then did you not give yourself an angel's intellect and an angel's greatness; Why will you in a few years be in the grave, or be a feeble old man creeping towards the grave? Why can you not ward off the strokes of disease and the arrows of death?

Have you your own way, my young friend! Ah! it is *your own* way, in distinction from the way of wisdom, the way of life, the way of God. And where will that way lead you? At what place will it land you? And to what kind of existence in the eternal world will it lead you? Will my young inexperienced friend thus tear himself away from God's protection, and like the foolish beast that takes the bits between his teeth, imagine that he can run away from his destiny and shake off the government of the infinite God?

Never, my friends, did I feel greater cause of humiliation before God than I do in closing these Lectures upon the dangers of GREAT

CITIES. The opportunity to make impressions, and to warn and interest, has been a very uncommon one. Oh! that I had been able to do justice to the subject, justice to my fellow-citizens, justice to my own conceptions of what I ought to have done, or to my accountability to God. I have done but little towards pointing out the dangers and the temptations of these mighty gatherings of men; and very little towards making the proper impression as to the work of ruin which is going on here.

Alas! the spot where the ship is wrecked is not the place for you to go in order to see the ruins. The rocks are there, and the angry waves are dashing over them still; but if you would see the wreck, go to the shore, and there you will see the broken ship, the destroyed goods, and the bodies of the dead, as they float up and are thrown on the land. Here are the rocks, and here the waves dash, and here the beautiful ships are wrecked; but you must leave the city, and go out to the country villages which supply us with their dearest sons, and there you see the wrecks. There the waves which roll back from the city, carry the dead and the stranded. Oh! there are

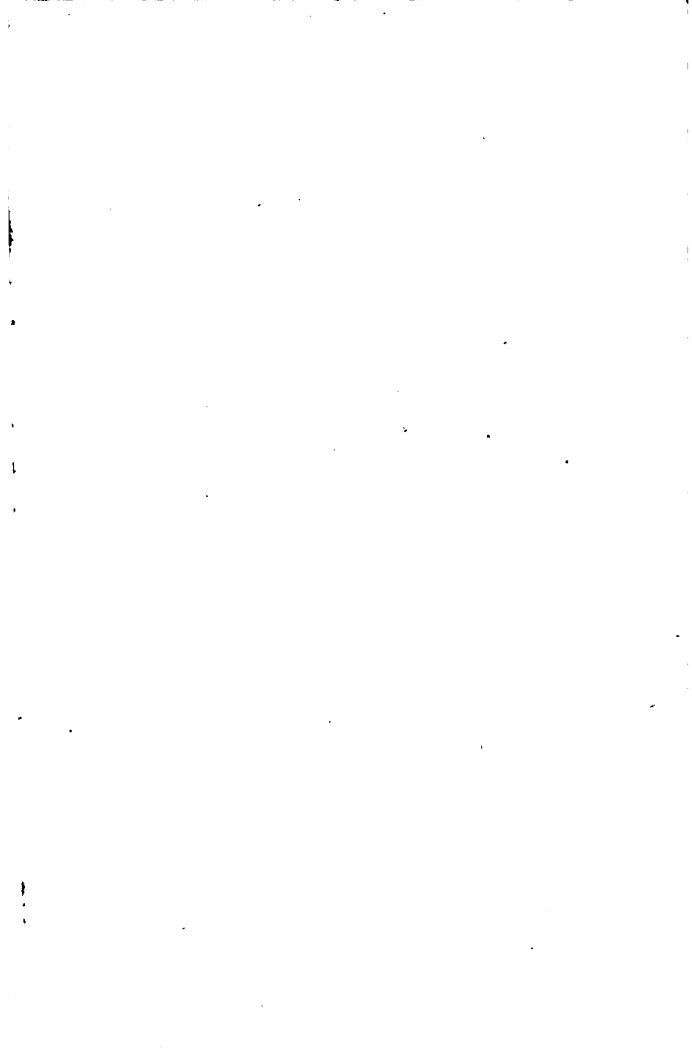
the weepings, the deaths of agony, the broken-hearted ones, the early funerals—and the deep wailings over the ruins which the great city has made.

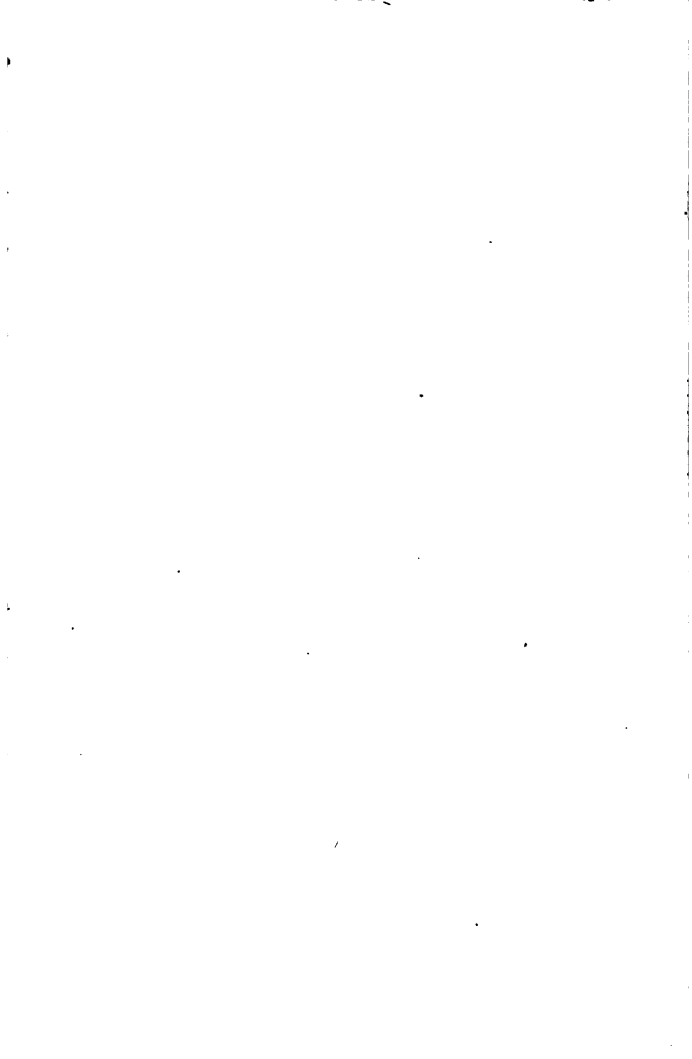
Oh! let not the mother, who has reared up her son with so many prayers and tears, send him here till his principles are firm and fixed, and his heart established in piety. The mercy and the grace of God may indeed, in answer to her prayers, reach him even here; for here, amid great temptations, we have great privileges and great mercies. But she runs a risk of which her pure heart can form no conception. And if these pages should meet the eye of one who has a child in the great city, or one about to come to it, let her most earnestly cover the head of that child with her prayers, and charge him, in the sight of God, that he here read his Bible, go to the house of God, and pray for divine protection. Oh! how little do those who dwell in the peaceful country think of our need of their prayers and their remembrance! They think of our splendor, admire our wealth, feel that we have the luxuries of the earth; but, oh! they have no conception how hard it is to do good here;

—to save one soul—to aid men to find the path of life, and to walk in it when found! Our streets are thronged by the gay and the busy during the day:—they are brilliantly lighted up and echo the footsteps of thousands during the night:—our ministers labor with an assiduity, and a consuming anxiety, such as I never dreamed of while in the country; but ah! the Spirit of God does not come to these thousands with a power that arrests the tide, and saves the many who are carried away by it. We move onward to our end with inconceivable rapidity; Oh! that we might have the prayers of the good throughout the land, that the waters of life might flow among us, and prepare us for a City above, whose builder and whose maker is God!

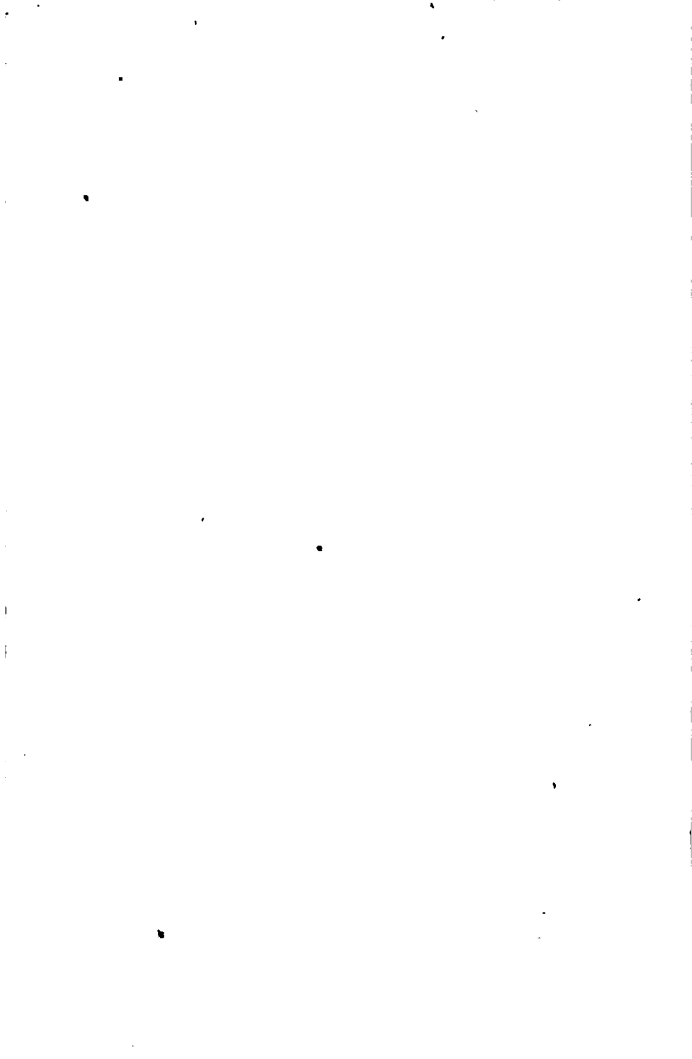
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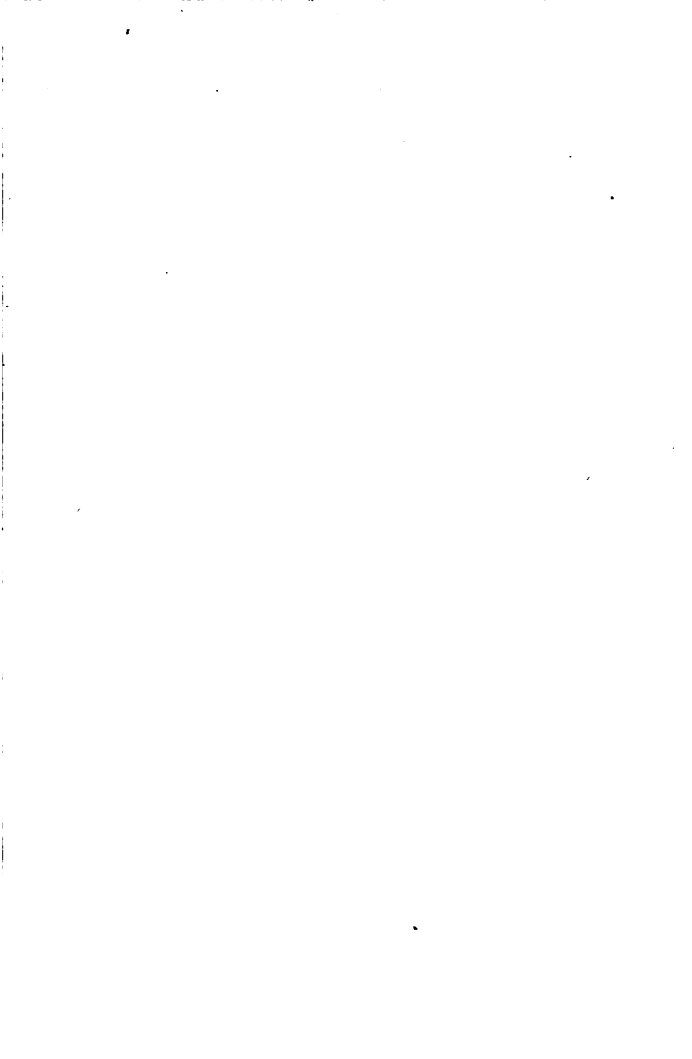




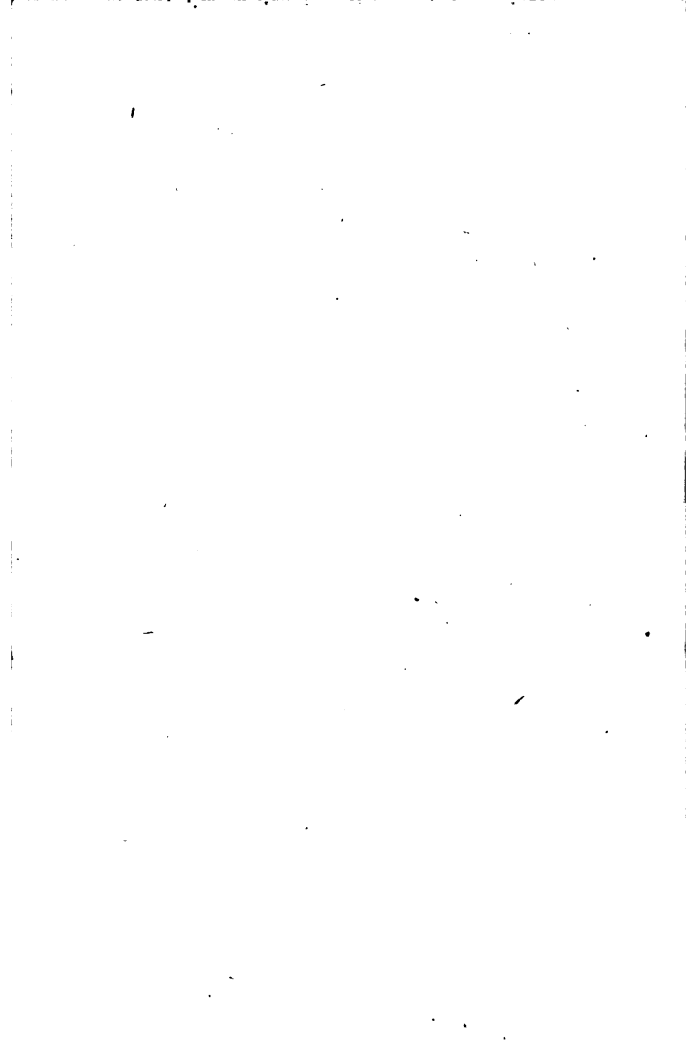
















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